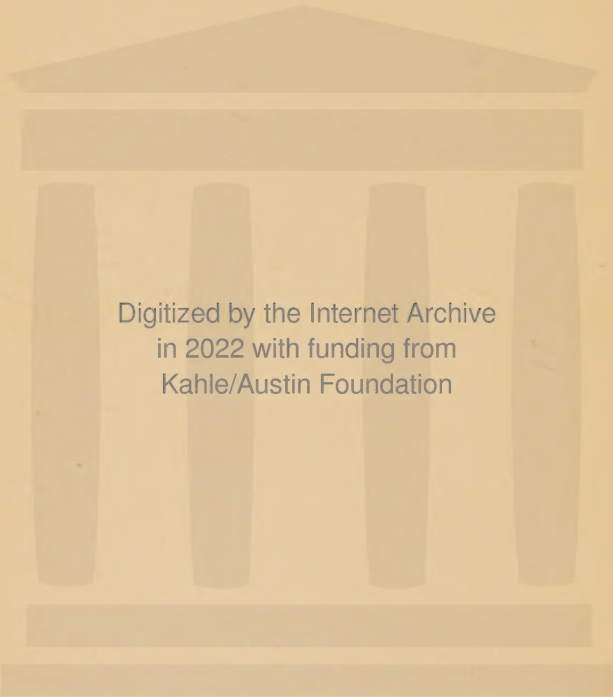


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JESUS: AN UNFINISHED PORTRAIT

Jesus:

An Unfinished Portrait

By

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This Volume is Dedicated

to

MY WIFE

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INTRODUCTION

IT was Cassius, in the play of Julius Cæsar, who declared to Brutus:

“I had as lief not be, as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I Myself!”

Yet the lean and hungry Cassius had been no less of a philosopher for awe of I MYSELF. If for no other reason, because of its possibilities. In Myself lurks at least the potentiality of genius; and genius has been the idol of hero worship, the playground of art, and the despair of science.

History has been redeemed from its monotonous story of greed, violence, vice, and crime, and has been made picturesque, eloquent, and helpful only by the advent, now and then and here and there, of—not persons merely—but personages, of Cæsars—of kings and queens who came by right divine—who in the plenitude of power all their own, have

availed their fellow men, to restate knowledge, interpret mystery, abolish time-honored institutions, and transform society.

We all stand in awe of such men and women. And for this very reason we fail to scrutinize them closely and measure them accurately. Contemporaneous observers exalt them: posterity deifies them. The flashing of their genius out-dazzles the every-day human in them; the commonplace being in them, who ate, drank, and slept, who caught the world's attention, only after struggle, who like countless others loved and hated, sorrowed and endeavored, often lost heart and sometimes fell short, dies with their mortality; only the exceptional gifts, which perhaps few of their neighbors perceived, have won immortality, and these are now exaggerated and glorified.

It is too easily forgotten or ignored by the hero-worshiper, that little credit would attach to a being all superhuman; and that the greatness of any personality is in the accomplishment of notable results, despite earthly conditions of a crippling character. It is the

human limitation itself, and this alone, which makes genius in a man wonderful.

The sublime personality, with whose character, environment, and work we busy ourselves in this treatise, of all heroes has suffered most, in his history and the impression he has made upon men, from the glare of his own ethical and religious grandeur; and in the minds of countless of the good and wise his marvelous genius has effaced his humanity, even to the extent of rendering any discussions of his limitations, however reverent, an apparent sacrilege. Mention the name of Jesus to these, and they think only of supreme creative power, of a god-man who worked miracles and wrought an infinite sacrifice; who, though poor, untaught, and without political influence, social standing, armies, or carnal enforcements and allurements of any kind, called men by the thousand from business and pleasure to become beggars and, perchance, to die for himself and his teachings; who awed the powerful, confounded the wise,

closed and sealed an ancient religion, established a universal faith, and turned the world upside down.

But is it not evident that were Jesus of Nazareth an entire exception, had he lived apart from the ordinary conditions of earthly existence, and were we forced to view him as only a diaphanous apparition of the Divine, a splendid theophany or a veritable god incarnate, there could be no occasion for critical treatment? Deity can not be defined, nor qualified, nor even pictured, by the human imagination; and the impression made by Jesus upon any human intellect, had he been a Khrishna, a man-god or a god-man, could only have been a mere sense of dazzling effulgence, a bewilderment of awe and wonder, while any scientific handling of the problem would be quite out of the question.

Abundant evidence remains that there was, back of the hero, a commonplace man, a Jesus of the village, the fields, and the shops, and no estimate of his nature and no history of his career can be anything but romance,

which does not start out from the human, the daily, and the limited in his story, and which does not pursue the theme with reverence for natural and spiritual law, with fidelity to the canons of biographical criticism, and with absolute loyalty to the truth.

This little book is a humble attempt along these lines.

PART FIRST
THE AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW

CHAPTER I

THE COMMONPLACE JESUS

WE simply begin at the beginning, when, in endeavor to delineate the Master, we start out with the Jesus of the fields, the village, and the shop. No most ardent believer in His very godhood can challenge the fact that He was a man of flesh and blood, of thought and feeling, of action and passion, quite like His neighbors. His annals assure us that He was born a babe, that He grew as a child, that He matured into manhood, that He hungered and thirsted even after His resurrection. He walked, He grew weary, He sat down, He reclined, slept, bled, and died. Nay, we may justly infer, from the transference of His cross on the fatal morning of the crucifixion, in the ascent to Golgotha, from His own shoulders to those of a peasant, that His physique was not even of ordinary robustness.

Had His personal appearance been impressive for peculiar beauty, or had he varied in any marked way or degree from His kind, in aspect or bearing, it is all but certain that some evidence of this must have survived. The silence of the annalists seems to refute the surmise of pious sentiment, that a Raphael or a Guido would have been delighted to sketch His face or form, or that a Phidias would gladly have preserved His figure in marble. Had Jesus been gifted with extraordinary physical attractiveness, the evangelists would not have failed to disclose somewhere, if only indirectly, the effect of this charm upon friend and foe. Doubtless He had that beauty of expression which a pure and sympathetic nature ever imparts to countenance, gesture, and movement; and we have evidence of a certain majesty of mien, the natural accompaniment of intense individuality and lofty aims. Beyond this He must be deemed, physically, as not above the average Jew of His day.

The mental nature of Jesus also conformed to the intellectual habitudes of His race and

class. He used the vernacular, with its characteristic ambiguities and idioms. Thus the meaning of John 3: 8, "The wind ($\piνεῦμα$) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit ($\piνεῦμα$)," depends upon the Jewish use of "ruah," the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word. Ruah in Hebrew meant successively breath, wind, spirit, Divine Spirit; and the saying was one of those earnest plays upon words, in which the Hebrew prophets delighted.

Jesus taught by fiction,¹ by irony,² by sarcasm,³ by enigma,⁴ by hyperbole, by denunciation—all figures and forms of speech suggesting the limitations of human intelligence. He perceived with attention, and mused upon what He saw ($ἐθεώρει$). He seems not to have frowned upon the little, transparent, and well-meant artifices of social courtesy, and in the walk to Emmaus, "He made as if He would

¹ Luke 15: 11–32.

² Math. 15: 23, 24, 26.

³ Luke 11: 48.

⁴ Luke 20: 41–44.

have gone further." To speak mildly, He evaded His brothers in the matter of going up to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles.¹

At times, He acted reluctantly, and many think that He spoke with annoyance at Cana, when His mother suggested that He should work a miracle in the interest of the general merriment.

By three evangelists He is described as marveling, though on but two occasions, in the one instance over unusual faith, and in the other over unusual unbelief. Once anger is imputed to Him,² but the circumstances indicate righteous indignation. He indulged in personal preferences, as in the case of Lazarus, John, Mary, and Martha, all of whom He "loved." He was so human that He was capable of loving at sight, and though the object of His sudden liking was so far from being in full sympathy with Him, that "he had great possessions" and went away grieved.³

His pity for the woes of men, very unusual

¹ John 7: 8, *ὁπίω* is a doubtful reading, see verse 10.

² Mark 3: 5.

³ Mark 10: 21, 22.

in intensity, seemed to humanize Him in an extraordinary degree, and bring Him down out of the lofty heights of His thinking, dreaming, and aspiration, into the sympathy of poor mortals; compassion preceded His coming as a fragrance of mercy, it formed a luminous atmosphere that accompanied and surrounded Him, it remained after He had gone, like the phosphorescence in the wake of a steamer traversing a midnight ocean. Every wretched creature felt the spell of His nearness, and murmured, "Oh, that I might but touch the hem of His garment!"¹ And all this was true, not because He was so divine, but because He was so human.

He sighed,² He "sighed deeply,"³ and twice it is reported that He groaned.⁴ He cried out in agony:⁵ he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and over Jerusalem, and in Gethsemane. In the last-mentioned place, He declared Himself "exceeding sorrowful even unto death"; and the intensity of the agony showed itself in

¹ Mark 3: 10.

³ Mark 8: 12.

⁵ Math. 27: 50.

² Mark 7: 34.

⁴ John 11: 33-38.

sweat-drops of blood. During the bodily pain and weakness of the crucifixion, for a moment He fell victim to despair, and cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" almost immediately recovering himself for the last words of faith: "It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

His quotations of Old-Testament Scripture form an interesting study in point. They were from memory, and He seems to have exerted no supernatural control over the processes of recollection, nor much less attempted any miraculous restoration of original readings. Compare Math. 12: 18 with Isaiah 42: 1-4. One very remarkable quotation, Luke 11: 49, can not even be identified in any Old-Testament writing, and was apparently a fair summing up of the substance of many prophetic utterances of a class heard at the synagogue readings and preserved in memory.

No slightest hint in the Gospels leads us to conclude that Jesus possessed any unusual technical, artistic, or scientific information, nor that he anticipated any future discoveries

in mechanics, physics, medicine, political economy, or even Biblical criticism. Indeed, there are indications that His scientific information was not above that of His time.¹

There are none but speculative reasons for inferring that He questioned the current demonology, as explanatory of hysteria, epilepsy, idiocy, and mania. He addressed demons as though they were personal beings,² and conversed with them and cast them out. He spoke, without interrogation, of the Devil and of his angels, of Satan, and of the Prince of this world. Of a woman, who had been bowed together and could in no wise lift herself, he queried: "Ought not this woman, . . . whom Satan hath bound, Lo! these eighteen years . . . ?" He also believed in the prevalent doctrine of guardian angels (see Math. 18: 10).

Moreover, no scriptural grounds whatever can be discovered for supposing that He re-

¹ Math. 5: 13 and 13: 32.

² Math. 17: 18, Luke 8: 30, Math. 13: 39, and John 8: 44, and Math. 25: 41.

jected or modified the Biblical criticism, such as prevailed in His day. Severely as he reflected upon the follies of rabbinical tradition, the popular veneration for the "Holy Scriptures," as well as the subservient literalism of the learned exegetes of the times, remained unchallenged. He evinced no modifying knowledge of geology or astronomy; while of the prehistoric man, of elementary documents in the Pentateuch, of chronological errors in the old records, of scholastic interpolations, and text variations in Holy Writ, there is left us no hint in all His teachings. He alluded to the Scriptures quite in the method of Peter and of James, of Shammai and of Hillel; and His references were without qualifications to Adam and to Abel, to Job, to Moses, and to Jonah. He believed that Jonah abode three days in the whale's belly, and that Lot's wife was turned to salt (Luke 17: 32).

We conclude, then, that there was a commonplace Jesus, a creature of bone, muscle, and nerve, far from robust—like an incandescent electric lamp, a soul of light in a body of glass.

CHAPTER II

THE OCCULT JESUS

THE personality of the prophet Jesus, wonderful and powerful as it was, might have utterly failed to make any lasting impression upon the gross age in which He lived had He not been capable of certain activities of an unusual kind, which fixed the attention of the thoughtless, awed the mighty, and impressed the simple.

Indeed, His "works," in the sight of his contemporaries, were far more significant than His "words." A recent and more thoughtful age has reversed this verdict, and were it not for the words would reject the works altogether. As a matter of fact, both are needed to explain the historical Jesus. That He wrought "signs and wonders" was as necessary a part of His mission as that He should "speak as never man spake." That an igno-

rant and credulous age should pronounce His mighty works miracles was inevitable, and that a skeptical modern era of induction and experimentation should declare those ancient stories of triumph over ordinary conditions the legendary growths of after times, is also quite to have been expected. But neither the former superstition nor the recent skepticism has rightly interpreted the facts.

The commonplace Jesus would never have attracted historical notice had there not been in Him psychic gifts stirring in men veneration for an occult Jesus.

Let us briefly sum up these signs and wonders as recorded.

Jesus is said to have discerned the minds of men; or, as this age would express it, He was gifted in "mind-reading." The fourth gospel declares of Him, that "He knew men and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." This insight was extraordinary: He searched the heart of the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, and her present social status and past history

were an open book to His all-seeing eye. The character and mood of Zaccheus were revealed to an upward glance, as the Master passed under a sycamore tree at Jericho; the treachery of Judas was in vain concealed from Him (Math. 26: 25); Simon Peter, and all the disciples, were the objects of a scrutiny which would have been uncanny, in its marvelous penetration, but for its spirit of love and benevolence (Luke 22: 31). Easily he penetrated the motives of his opponents, as the evangelists frequently assure us. In short, he was telepathic.

Moreover, He was endowed with that remarkable vision of things far away—past, present, and future—which psychologists name lucidity, and which in common parlance is called clairvoyance. He saw Nathaniel, afar, under the fig-tree, and He read the character and history of the distant stranger, whom He had never known in the ordinary way, accurately. During a dark night, from the shore, He “saw” the disciples toiling at the oar in a boat on the heaving sea of Galilee. At a

distance, and without tidings, He knew that Lazarus lay stricken and entombed. Foresight of coming events was a frequent experience: He predicted Peter's downfall, His own death and resurrection, the persecution of the disciples, the fate of individual followers, the destruction of the Temple, the overthrow and annihilation of Jerusalem, the end of the world (*æon*, age), the coming of a Divine Comforter, the election of the Gentiles, the completion of His work in a certain Coming, and a final Judgment. That He foresaw the entire future, is not only not asserted, but denied, and his prevision, like that of other clairvoyants, appears to have been occasional, incidental, and incomplete.

His works of healing were innumerable and incessant. Hysterics, epileptics, idiots, maniacs, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, the paralytic, the halt, the exhausted—all responded to His power in recovery from their peculiar ills, in cures that amazed and thrilled the multitude. Sometimes this was done by a mere word, sometimes it required touch, and

in a few cases there was appearance of remedial agency (Mark 6: 56, 7: 33, 8: 22-25; John 9: 6, 7), but there are no recorded failures.

All this was of course pronounced miraculous in the days of the Roman emperors. It is every-day science now. Workers in the various societies of psychical research, in many countries, under supervision of some of the most able scientists of to-day, are reducing to law, that is, to generalized statement—for laws are only generalized results of experience, brief statements of discovered relationships between groups of facts—these seemingly uncanny and lawless outbreaks of human intelligence. Telepathy and lucidity are now well proven facts; and it begins to appear that they are universal gifts, more or less latent however, in most persons.

The mental cure of disease, involving great power of mind over body, must now be recognized by all thoughtful and observant persons, as a well-attested fact, under certain conditions. Doubtless much rubbish is represented in the pretensions of the "faith cure," the

“mind cure,” and “Christian science;” but there is now shown to be a basis of truth in their claims. Even the “miracles” of Lourdes, of Holywell, and other shrines are not fabrications, and the ministrants of these sacred places are by no means impostors. Moreover, any one, skilful in hypnotic control, can exorcise headaches, toothaches, almost any ache, and even hypochondria and drunkenness. The human soul is a vast thesaurus of possibilities very little explored. It is well to remember that it was Voltaire, prince of skeptics, who declared: “It takes twenty years to bring man from the state of embryo, and that of mere animal, to the point when his reason begins to dawn. It has taken thirty centuries to know his structure. It would take eternity to know something of his soul.”

Out of the superstition, self-deception, and knavery of ages, begins to emerge a psychology large enough to comprehend even Jesus of Nazareth.

There is every historical reason to ascribe to Jesus great psychic power, and there is no

reason for denying Him gifts which, in the eyes of contemporaries, established Him as an occult being superior to nature and in complete touch with the mysterious forces which overruled the world.

That He wrought miracles, no man in His time could doubt, and no intelligent person need to-day affirm. He found Himself a psychic of high degree, and used His most unusual gifts for the good of the people.

That He did heal the sick and verily cast out devils—or what seemed such in those days—and that He performed many wonderful works, then, we feel constrained to admit as scientifically allowable and as historically proven; and in that very situation we perceive large explanation of the success of His mission.

That the Master understood the scope and significance of His own psychic powers we can not insist; that the credulous popular explanations of His works were His own interpretation of Himself, we are far from declaring; that He ever resorted to trickery to win applause, to eke out His gifts, or even to gain

a reasonable hearing, we utterly refuse to believe, as inconsistent with His character and general conduct.

The hypothesis of Spiritualism, now current, that He was a great Medium and had converse with "controls," who gave Him assistance from another world, was practically the theory of His enemies in His own day, who charged that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, or some other unclean spirit. This charge seemed to Him, although He believed in demonology, the grossest blasphemy. He was helped, He admitted, but by the Holy Spirit of the Most High; and to ascribe His power to lower agency was defamation of the Deity, so atrocious, that of all sins it alone could hope for no forgiveness. To His own view, Jesus was in this regard a soul inspired, and His works were possible to Him only through the efficacy of a life of singular purity and constant fasting and prayer (Mark 9: 29).

As we shall see, the Occult Jesus explains the Messianic Jesus: His signs and miracles

formed an essential element not only in the success of His life and message, but no less in His own unfolding religious consciousness.

It must not be inferred that these signs and wonders served the Master as credentials of office for us, or as evidence of a divine mission for this age, for He was by no means alone even in the exalted possession and exercise of psychic gifts. His own disciples and many men have healed the sick, "cast out devils," and done very strange things. While signs and wonders were the necessary emphasis upon His ministration of mercy in a crass, brutal age, they are for us a pictorial illustration of the Gospel message. That He Himself attached no exaggerated value to His mysterious powers, in comparison with graces of character and the potency of a consecrated personality, appears in His warning to the Seventy when they came back from their mission exulting over their ability to cast out demons: "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaven!"

CHAPTER III

THE LEGENDARY JESUS

THE psychic gifts ascribed to Jesus and alluded to in the last chapter, by no means exhaust the wonders of the Biblical record. Much more remarkable manifestations of personal power and privilege than the facts of mind-reading, lucidity, and healing, which we have admitted, were ascribed to the Prophet of Nazareth by all the evangelists. We are assured that Jesus could convey Himself through multitudes, with inference of His temporary invisibility, as at Nazareth and Jerusalem. He turned water into wine at Cana in Galilee. He multiplied loaves and fishes; by a few words of rebuke He stilled a tempest; He walked upon waves. Much more, He raised the dead,—Jairus's daughter, the son of the widow at the gate of Nain, and Lazarus. After His resurrection He appeared

and vanished at will, in the manner of apparitions; and it was the tradition of the early Church, based on the testimony of eye-witnesses, that at last He floated up heavenward, disappearing finally from earth, like Elijah, by ascension.

These allegations seem to bring us out of the realm of mere psychic potency into a region of tradition, myth, and legend; and we are constrained to recognize the fact that the story of His life—the more naturally so because of its just claim to unusual gifts—fell, perforce, subject to those modifications which love, zeal, and simple-mindedness in a credulous age rendered inevitable.

Nor are we justified in deeming such inference either improbable in itself or belittling to the credibility of the narrative, in view of the fact that all ancient literature and even soberest histories entirely free from the bias of strong emotions, suffered such poetic distortion. The admission no more invalidates the account as a whole, and no more prevents us from a just weighing of the real facts, than

does similar high coloration render worthless the histories of Livy and Herodotus, the books of Kings, or the Saxon Chronicle. It was inevitable that faith, devotion, credulity, ignorance, and superstition should have combined and, without fraudulent intent, to add much to the actual occurrences of the Master's history.

Moreover some events, of a startling nature, may have been credulously but honestly misinterpreted, as the story of the Temptation and the "vision" of the Transfiguration. It is not improbable that the raising of dead persons to life again may have been only a clairvoyant perception of trance, simulating and mistaken for death, and that the event was a psychic awakening of dreamers; indeed, hints of this are to be found in the stories of the raising of both Jairus's daughter and of Lazarus (Luke 8: 52, John 11: 11).

At one point in the Biblical narrative, the critic is justified in boldly abandoning the attitude of caution, and in appealing to the well-known legendary and mythical tendencies

of the human mind, to explain otherwise incredible averments. We allude to the Immaculate Conception, and to occurrences associated with the Birth. That these beautiful portrayals lend themselves not only to the loftiest spirituality but also, and in the highest degree, to artistic treatment, the whole history of the Church and of medieval architecture and painting testifies. But they are what must have arisen at that early period, as the apotheosis of the Founder proceeded in the Apostolic Church, and as the once living and real Prophet became more and more a type, an ideal, the crystallizing center of an elaborate system of dogmatics. These legends added impressiveness to the sacred memories, justified the growing claims, and were not so much deliberately invented as presupposed of necessity.

Jesus must be shown to have descended from David; and Matthew and Luke secured the needed genealogy, each by his own method, both, possibly, with correctness. Jesus must appear as far more than any mere prophet,

and rather as a theophany, or a Divine Emanation; and if He were to be born as a man at all, there was but the method of Immaculate Conception. That this involved the Apostolic Church in falsehood, no one who has studied the rise of myths and legends will admit. A myth or a legend is not the growth of falsehood but of imagination, of popular thought, of popular dreams, of popular yearnings—it is born of the foam on the waves of a great sea, no one knows how or where, and takes such shape as the thoughtfulness of the poetry of the age conceiving it can give.

But in this judgment we are not guided solely by general considerations, our position is supported by sound Biblical criticism. Apart from the inherent improbability of the alleged events of the Nativity, and apart from the inevitability of the rise of some such “dawn rose” in the early morning of Christianity, the absence of any allusion to the infancy of Jesus in the ancient gospel of Mark, is fatal to the credibility of the beautiful proems in the gospels of Matthew and

Luke. Moreover, Jesus Himself emphatically rebuked the first outbreak of Mariolatry when, as an over-zealous woman lifted up her voice and blessed His mother (not, be it observed, because of her personal merit, but because she had borne and suckled him), He sternly replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it!" Nor is there recorded any reference by the Master to a remarkable infancy.

Indeed, is it not evident that the stories of the Annunciation, Conception, and Birth of Jesus rather detract from than add to the value of His work, and that they belittle His personality? That as a man, born of a woman, He is more impressive and admirable than as a theophany or a Divine Emanation, must appear to any one not prejudiced by theological training and not under the spell of ecclesiastical legend.

It is the common mistake of primitive poetry to render heroes impressive by giving them invulnerability, or the assistance of gods, fairies, or magicians. Achilles could be wounded

only in the foot, King Arthur wielded an Excalibur forged on a mystic isle. One ancient hero had a diamond shield, another a corselet which could not be pierced, another a magic coat of mail—or Mars, or Venus, or fairies, or magicians run to his help when in danger. But the more mature judgment of later times always perceives that victory is not great when inevitable, with no chances for the adversary, and that the man who triumphs over his own weakness, as well as over his foe, is the only valiant warrior. We now see what Jesus most clearly perceived, that to rise above earthly feebleness of body and will, and to become wise, strong, beloved, and influential, despite limitations, marks a greater hero far than any Achilles or King Arthur.

It was the most natural thing in the world that an Apostolic Age should have dreamed the vision of the Nativity and that after-periods should have idealized this still further on canvas and stone; and no less inevitable was it that our own critical age should reject it, as not only improbable and as not consist-

ent with the narratives themselves and the teachings of the Master, but much more because unworthy of Him.

The Resurrection of Jesus stands on quite another footing. That He should have appeared after death, in apparition, again and again, may also be legendary, but it is sustained by testimony, and in view of recent discoveries in Psychic Research not to be pronounced as beyond the natural possibilities.

PART SECOND

HOW JESUS DISCOVERED HIS MISSION

CHAPTER IV

THE ENVIRONMENT

THE Hebrew language was largely made up of verbs, as Herder put it, “a very abyss of verbs, a sea of waves, where action rolls surging into ever new action.”

The history of the Hebrews had been an epic poem, all emotion and movement, and the speech expressed the national character. Hence the many thrilling episodes and sublime personalities in the memory of the people. Back of every Jew loomed up gigantic figures of the remote past—heroes, prophets, kings, a Moses, an Elijah, a David—who had been faithful to Jehovah and loyal to the guidance of the Spirit, in life and unto death. For such people to believe in a spiritual Deity, a Divine Law, and an inspired life was to be themselves inspired, and to walk in the path of the just. Those heroes had given all for

the glory of their people, the triumph of their religion, and the name of their God. Picturesque, majestic, heroic, they passed by in lordly procession before the imagination of every devout and patriotic youth, some bearing rolls, some girded with swords, some carrying harps, some wearing crowns, but all Jehovah's Chosen, His prophets, His warriors, His poets, and His kings. Their advent had marked for mankind and for human history the most complete religious enlightenment the world had known. No nation had enjoyed such a past, and the youth of no land had received any such inspiration to spirituality and heroism.

But all that had occurred long ago, in the rosy dawn of Hebrew faith, and was now but national tradition, nursery prattle, and vivid text for the homilies of the scribes in the synagogues. Judea had undergone the inevitable reaction from prolonged sublimity of thought and conduct. This was to have been expected and concerns our theme.

It is the tendency of mankind, even after

the greatest religious awakenings, to relapse into formal worship and innate faith. Religion is always and everywhere in danger of becoming largely a matter of instinct, of accidental surrounding, of indifference and prejudice. People may follow the traditions of their fathers, listen patiently to their ordained instructors, read devoutly their sacred books, and even go through the forms of what seems to them decent worship, without at all coming under the power of a living faith. Belief, in this case, becomes a habit, a formula, a prattle; it fails to challenge investigation or awaken doubt. At any period of history may be observed somewhere this decadence of faith.

To illustrate, take the Mohammedans of the present time, of whom there are no fewer than one hundred and twenty millions; they believe in Allah, in Mohammed, and in the Koran; they cherish in their holiest shrine the green flag of the prophet, on which is written, "The Gates of Paradise are under the shadow of swords," and "Then may no

man give nor receive mercy." They believe that all the unfaithful are to be tortured in a pot of flames, and that whoso endure, especially such as die bravely in battle, are to abide forever in a paradise of surpassing loveliness, where every appetite and desire shall be indulged without stint and without surfeit; they hold to the ultimate triumph of their cause and it is highly probable that many of them, were the issue forced, would die for their faith. Thus, theoretically, Mohammedanism is a religion of action and aggression. And there was a time when fierce sons of the desert, their ancestors and predecessors, made the world turn pale at terror of their war-cry, but that was when their faith was keener than their scimitars and more repellent than their coats of mail. Now for ages the soldiers of the prophet have been content to be left merely unmolested, the green banner of the Crescent remains furled in its holy place, and the scimitar is drawn only to murder Christian peasants, to chastise unruly Kurds, and to repel invasion of Cossack and Russian. The

Islam plaster on the ceiling of the great mosque at Constantinople—formerly the Christian church of Santa Sophia—has in places crumbled off, revealing the texts that once beautified it as a cathedral of the Cross; and the faithful are said to be awaiting the fulfilment of an old prophecy, foretelling the coming of the White Czar to water his horses beneath the splendid dome. The Sultan, who calls himself the Padishah of all the believing, always has ready at the water-gate of his royal palace a yacht equipped for speedy flight into Asia; and lo! the one hundred and twenty millions fold their hands and murmur, “Great is God! God’s will be done!”

Or, ponder the Buddhism of to-day: it is in like manner and measure heartless and lifeless. We see hundreds of millions of our fellow men practising a faith of much elaborateness, which has gone through a great history. Once it lived and breathed, spoke and grew; but now it is moribund, it prays by water-power, reads its Bible by revolving a cylinder in which are the sacred writings, and

mutters and begs—mere inherited habit, instinct become prejudice.

The epoch of the appearance of Jesus was in such an age of religious decline. Judaism was then where Mohammedanism and Buddhism are to-day. Worship was formal, service heartless, faith unthinking. The religious were either Pharisees—that is, sticklers for form, precedent, and creed—or Sadducees, who were more or less devout unbelievers, or conscientious but narrow Essenes—High Church, Broad Church, and Low Church—formalists, rationalists, or pietists. The Pharisees were champions of the past, forgetting nothing and learning nothing; they held that the Almighty wore phylacteries, and their motto was that “long prayers make a long life.” The Sadducees put faith in no one but themselves, and were contented with shrewd devisings, cheap tolerance, and glittering generalities. The Essenes held up holy hands of horror toward all the others, and believed that if the truth were told it would appear that themselves monopolized vital godliness. As we of Amer-

ica might describe these parties, they were Old School, New Departure, and Salvation Army. The Sadducees were the most intellectual, the Pharisees the most proper, and the Essenes most in sympathy with men.

Over against the formalities of a decayed Hebraism was everywhere apparent, within the diversely populated land and on all sides round about, a confusion of no less decadent Paganistic faiths. Paganism, then, as in former ages, furnished a foil to Jewish practise and belief, and more or less penetrated into every condition of social life. On the surface, Paganism was merry; it had its spring festivals and danced about a May-pole; it had its jolly harvest Saturnalia; it loved sunshine, flowers, wine, and song; whatever was natural seemed right, and religion, far from "binding back"—which is what the word means—far from checking the passions and mortifying selfishness in pleasure, licensed every vice. The temples and sacred groves resounded with the drunken clamor of shameless orgies. Yet all this gaiety was only on the surface; for

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Nature was not only sunshine, flowers, wine, and laughter, she cherished her volcanoes, her thunderbolts and hurricanes, her poisons, diseases, and famines, her pestilence, and her death. Beneath the gay exterior of idol worship was the trembling of superstition, forever haunted by specters. The dangerous, venomous, hostile, and deadly lurked in every shadow: terror begat cruelty, and cruelty banished any real sweetness of spirit. Bloody sacrifices alone could appease the jealous, vengeful gods, and even human beings must sometimes die on divine altars. The world, for any but the dull and brutal, seemed after all a sad place, and therefore suicide was common; and even philosophers argued that it was right to take one's life when cares and pains pressed too hard. Those who had made ship-wreck of life, heart-sick, plunged into the mystery of death as escape into the unknown, which, though it seemed gruesome, was yet less appalling than a miserable existence. Thus Paganism, with all its merrymaking, was helpless, hopeless, cynical, and sad.

It happened that, during the youth of Jesus, there fell across this confusion of posturing, doubting, self-torment, and laughter, of selfish indulgence, of cruelty and despair, the long shadow of a sublime personality. Amid the endless chatter of texts and prayers, of shouts and of shrieks, a voice of thunder was heard, hushing much of this babble into momentary silence.

John the Baptist appeared upon the scene of action.

A prophet of the olden time, a veritable Elijah, who had no earthly interests at stake—no wife, child, nor home—a hero without fear, dreading the most ferocious despot no more than his neighbor the desert lion, a cave-man in skins, whose food was less palatable than that of the village jackals. He was rather a Cry than a human being—a Call to every conscience, resounding through the land: “Repent! Repent!” His repentance was nothing subtle, only a change from evil to good, and his cry was but a repetition of the old, old appeal, “Cease to do evil and learn

to do well; wash you of your sins, make you clean!" And he invited all men down into Jordan, and his words were emphasized and made memorable in his simple rite of washing, which was but vivid parable in righteousness, showing pictorially to the world the peril and the need of the times.

It is of extreme interest to the theologian that the grand history of Hebraism—of its prophetic fervor, its sacred literature, its splendid Temple, and stately liturgy—should have ended in one lone man calling all other men to repentance. But every religion, in its last analysis, comes down to this, a man speaking in tremendous earnestness to his fellows on things that concern the relation of the immortal soul to the Unseen World. Eloquent exhortations, holy writings, sacred shrines, and impressive ritual can, after all is said, mean nothing more than personal piety and personal purity; in their prosperity and power they do but utter this, and in their decadence it is this that calls them to account and pronounces their judgment. It is perhaps

well for the world to be reminded now and then, by the very isolation of stern virtue, that righteousness is realized in just two conditions, which only are essential to the whole idea—the Voice of One and the Response of Many.

CHAPTER V

THE SELF-DISCOVERY

THE redeeming feature in the Judaism of that day was the survival, not only in John but in many men and women, of the old-time expectation of a Coming Deliverer. If everything else living and lofty in religion had withered, at least the ancient Messianic hope was still green. Perhaps it was clung to in those degenerate days with a greater tenacity because of the crassness of the times, since it is generally in periods of depression that people most vividly dream of the past and most eagerly await the future.

The Jewish faith in a coming Messiah, first and last, was probably as noteworthy and as elevating an aspiration as ever swayed any race of men. We go back of John a thousand years and find a whole nation listening

for a footfall, and never tiring of their vision and never despairing on account of delays.

There was one who should come to bring glory and peace! The people were always scanning countenances and studying the times. No king could assume the diadem but that popular expectation trembled in eager hope that he might prove the anointed of Jehovah; no prophet could arise but he must meet the query, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" There was always ahead, no matter what the present embarrassment, "a fulness of times" and "an end of days" when these things should be. The more the expectation was disappointed the stronger it became, Messiah through delays only became lordlier in the popular imagination, His kingdom more extensive and powerful, His sway more magnificent. Prophet, Priest, and King, all three, He should be, uniting in Himself every hopeful office and all fair ideals; His enemies would bow down before Him, the span of human life would

lengthen, the very desert burst into blossom, and Paradise itself return with flowers and fruits perennial.

Every Jewish mother hoped to give birth to this Anointed. Every boy was free to believe that he might prove the Deliverer. The more spiritual the nature, the more intense the hope, the ambition.

By how much Jesus surpassed other lads in gifts of mind and heart by so much was He likely to excel them, in mental dwelling upon this possibility and in emotional yearning to achieve its sublimities of character and action. That this was true of Him we can not affirm as history, and yet the imagination compels us to it. There must have been a long twilight before His dawn of awakening. We learn from the annals that "He increased in wisdom and stature," the mental growth being given the prominence doubtless because more noticeable and pronounced. Luke assures us that He was "in favor with God and man." He was "subject" to His parents, manifestly a docile child. There was nothing mon-

strous, uncanny, or even prodigious about His early youth. In the Temple, at twelve, was He found by His father and mother, and among the devout and learned, like the youthful Josephus and many other thoughtful children of the times, seeking wisdom; a mere lad among bearded rabbis, He was not prophesying, He was making no claims, and not even affecting to teach. Knowing that He was about His "Father's business," He was simply listening to the masters of Jewish law and lore, and only asking questions—evidently a child of deep thought, a dreamer, pensive on those themes which occupied the devout but were beyond the ken of most lads.

The unusual childhood must have been followed by a very unwonted youth. To be sure the record fails us here, and for nearly a score of years we are left to our surmisings, but in view of what preceded and followed these may have all the force of recorded facts. All other geniuses, before their awakening to vision of their high destiny, have lived an unrecorded inner experience of long preparation.

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There was always a proem before the drama. The psychological development preceded the historical appearance. Between the boyhood of which we have such meager account, and maturity, there must have been a chrysalis stage of growth for the coming glory of wings and flight.

It is quite incredible that at an age so mature as thirty, Jesus could have failed to observe his possession of peculiar gifts, gifts denied his comrades. Mind-reading and lucidity do not come unawares, nor remain hidden; his healing gift must have already wrought results attracting attention. Mary's confidence in His ability to turn water into wine at Cana, in the very beginning of His public ministry, argues some family discovery and recognition of His powers.

And this was the least of the psychological unfolding. All those years were brooding-time over the condition of Israel, the hope of the world, the coming Messiah, and the sublime possibility hovering above every young Jew.

But we must not deem Him to have discovered Himself before the event of His baptism by John.

Nor had others discovered Him. Though He excited astonishment on account of His deep thoughtfulness and spirituality, He surely did not awaken any extravagant expectations on the part of friends and neighbors. There is absolutely no scriptural warrant for the conclusion that His precocity encouraged any one, whether at the time of His being found in the Temple with the rabbis or later, up to the meeting with John, to expect from Him redemption for Israel. He was only a poor peasant, with some technical skill as a carpenter but without even the rudiments of scholarly education. People of course knew that prophets had arisen from the lowliest of the population, like Micah, and that nothing forbade His becoming a seer should Jehovah call Him and grant the needed gift; but to be a son of David, to receive the chrism of kings, to lead the armies of Israel, that was hardly for one peasant-born. Even His cousin,

John the Baptist, though recognizing in Him unusual personal worth, failed to build great expectations for Israel on His future. "I knew Him not," protested the Baptist, "but He that sent me to baptize with water, the Same said unto me, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him,' the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

But though Jesus did not at first strongly draw John, the latter powerfully attracted Jesus. The very deep impression His cousin had made upon the young Prophet appeared later, when the Master declared to His disciples that of all born of woman a greater than John the Baptist had not risen.

John not only brought Jesus to an open profession of faith, as we should say, he helped the dreamer to self-discovery. The young convert, though needing no religious awakening, as John perceived at once—His attitude appearing to the Baptist as one of intense harkening for the Father's voice and child-like faith in the Father's love—came to Jordan,

not driven, as were others, by fear or remorse, but in eagerness to "fulfil all righteousness."

And in the waters of baptism He found Himself.

Here occurred the critical turning-point, not of conversion, nor of decision, but of illumination. It was like Saul's eye-opening after the vision on the way to Damascus. The Dove was to Jesus what the Burning Bush was to Moses, the Live Coal to Isaiah, or the Bo Tree to Gautama. If any one think to find in so simple an incident as the descent of the Dove an insufficient occasion for the mental tumult that followed, history will furnish many another no less trivial awakening of genius that was anything but trivial in results—a Giotto at ten years of age self-discovered in his charcoal drawings of sheep upon a stone; a Correggio made known to himself in a study of one of Raphael's pictures; a Canova in his lion shaped out of butter. It is told of Samuel Johnson that, when a youth, hunting for some apples laid away in an old library he came upon a copy of Petrarch, which opened to his

eager mind a whole new world of literature. Bossuet casually turned the leaves of his Bible to Isaiah and foresaw his future. So the Dove was fatal to Jesus and the turning-point of a great destiny. If we choose to look at His life as a drama the Baptism was the first scene in the first act of a sublime tragedy and all before was the proem.

Whether a miracle was wrought at this time it is unnecessary to inquire. To Jesus, as to John, what happened had the force of the supernatural. To John as to Jesus, and to all present, His baptism was His Call. Vision cleared, doubt vanished, the dream came true, the psychological seed-sowing bore fruit, ambition received its crown.

He now was discovered, He now discovered Himself, as the Beloved of God, the Sent, the Divine Healer, the Anointed.

Here two seas met, the Deep of Humanity and the Ocean of the Infinite. The descending of the dove and the sound in the skies cleared away all doubts and dissolved all clouds.

In the intense mental excitement and spir-

itual elevation of the moment, He knew Himself as filled with the Spirit. The Hebrew word for prophet, "nabi," the root idea of which is that of bubbling, effervescence, exactly expressed the state of mind and heart. He was now, in Hebrew parlance, a "man of the Spirit," in whom the divine afflatus was striving for complete mastery.

Jesus had become a nabi.

There remained, however, a question of submission. He was where Moses stood when God said to him, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth and will teach thee, what thou shouldst say,"—where Isaiah was, when the live coal touched his lips and the fainting heart heard the words of the divine commission with terror; where Jeremiah found himself when, pleading that he was but a babe, he besought Jehovah to send whom He would send and to spare him, and when yet he continued to hear the dread imperative call to leave all, and to dare all, and to lose all, for the sake of righteousness.

It may seem an enormous presumption to us that any mere Jew, however gifted and

self-consecrated, and much more one of the peasant class, should aspire to the fulfilment of the race ideal and satisfaction of the supreme national yearning; and it would have been such but for the young nabi's conception of the work before Him. Had the Messianic program before Him involved political power, gold, fame, and glory, His would have been only another case of rather vulgar and very worldly ambition; it would have been like the hope and expectation of one of becoming President of the United States, which many a rail-splitter, many a bargeman, many a farm boy in this country has cherished. But to this Prophet the pathway of the Messiah, like that of Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, alluded to, was an ascent of rocks, His coming kingly crown a wreath of thorns, His power a stress upon disease, death, and sin, His fame the luster of self-denying virtue, His radiance only a shining, through Himself effaced, of the Divine Light. It was not a case of ambition in the ordinary sense, but of self-discovery, as of one called to danger, to wide-eyed amaze-

ment, almost to shivering terror. Such a conviction was possible only to conscious genius when swayed by sublime self-devotion.

There is a time in the lives of all men of genius when they attain their sublimest height of thought. Alexander was greatest when in the desert he poured out upon the baking sands the helmet full of sparkling water brought to quench his bitter thirst, thinking it unworthy of him to refresh himself when his brave soldiers were nigh perishing for need of drink. Cæsar was greatest when in Egypt he remarked that he would give all his victories in exchange for one glimpse of the real sources of the river Nile. Luther never rose so high as in his declaration before the imperial diet, death seemingly in full prospect: "I can do no otherwise, so help me God!" The genius of Jesus seems to us at its highest point of flight and His personality in its sublimest unfolding when He, for the first time after self-discovery, confessed to His own heart, "I am, I am the King—I am—God pity me! the King Messiah!"

CHAPTER VI

THE CRISIS DECISION

THERE followed for Jesus a long seclusion, during which He struggled with Himself. The Spirit of God seethed and effervesced in Him as of old in Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. He fled from the companionship of men into absolute solitude and continuous soliloquy, not, like Elijah, hurrying to Sinai to escape danger and duty, but, like the great lawgiver, undisturbed to think out His thoughts, to talk with God, to grasp the grandeur of His mission. One evangelist declares that the Spirit "cast Him out," as if to picture the tempest of emotions that swept Him from the abodes of men.

Alone, in a wilderness, Jesus mused upon His destiny. Surely He was, like Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, the Sent of Jehovah; but, unlike those worthies, He was also the

King that was to come, and uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. In the wonderment of this discovery, in the strangeness of self-revelment as a Divine Messenger, during the dire effort to master His own consciousness of new duty from the appalling outlook upon a life of mastery over men, of heroism and of martyrdom, with the new sense of widening horizon and of vast scope of power and authority, came that inevitable accompaniment of decision, temptation.

It has been customary to make light of this ordeal in the interests of dogmatic theology and ecclesiastical tradition; and in most systems of Christian thought, this entire experience of the Master has been treated as something phenomenal, spectacular, and unreal, a mere triumphal display of immaculate virtue under even the subtlest assaults. No unworthy motive has been allowed the least weight with Jesus, no bad argument for Him supposed to possess any cogency whatever, and no vulnerable point of attack acknowledged. The very possibility of fall has been

admitted only as a shadowy metaphysical conception.

This, however, does not satisfy the conditions of the situation, nor deal honestly with the recording annals. Evil motives were certainly appealed to, bad arguments commonly effective with men were used, and points of attack were carefully selected which, if not weak in Jesus, in most, even of the best, of men are wont to be salient.

The description of the temptation is highly pictorial, and must be deemed one of the Master's parables, no doubt often repeated to His disciples in narrative form as a most important lesson. But, although thus in illustrative dress, it bears all the marks of actual occurrence and indicates a struggle of terrible severity.

Nor was there anything supernatural or unusual about the occurrence in any of its details. No genius, newly self-discovered, has ever escaped such crises of trial, and the temptations resisted or yielded to have been those attributed to Jesus.

In what is described by the evangelists as the first temptation, the motive played upon was the innate faithlessness of human nature, the argument was the very cogent stress of hunger, and the point of attack that possession of psychic gifts which, with most men, would have been the surest guarantee of fall. The tempter's suggestions appealing to that elation which naturally accompanies a sense of new and unexpected ability, opportunity, or authority, were well fitted to work a godless self-confidence. The nabi was perishing with hunger from one of those long fastings which, in the East, are considered the unavoidable conditions of spiritual elevation, and which we hungry westerners and gross feeders can so little comprehend: "Why not, relying on mighty self rather than on a so forgetful Providence, use this wonderful psychic gift, which knows without learning, sees without eyes, remembers without memory, and foresees what has not yet occurred, to satisfy just appetite?"

In the second temptation the motive reverses

itself and becomes that very faith which baffled the first assault, and the other side of the citadel is attacked. If faith were so supremely desirable, surely one could not have too much of it. "Go, O mighty prophet, tried and true, go to the Holy City and leap from the pinnacle of the Temple, in full sight of wondering multitudes! trust God's angels, and thus at once prove thy Messianic claims and accomplish speedily thy mission!" This, however, would have been a mere display of fanaticism or overfaith, the antipode of self-confidence, but equally reprehensible, indeed the second focus in the same ellipse of human folly.

The last onslaught uncovered masked batteries, and attempted to carry the young nabi's virtue by storm. The motive became ambition, the argument an urging of the practical omnipotence in human affairs of powerful selfishness, the salient point pride. "Use your rare gifts for supremacy, subdue all kingdoms, enjoy universal dominion, and satisfy your conscience by ruling in beneficence

though not regardless of self! Be an Alexander, a Cæsar, an Augustus!" Most terrible of all temptations because the most deceptive and alluring; the more deceptive because ambition is often noble, the more alluring because the most sublime.

The three sins repelled in the wilderness, then, were self-confidence, which is the disease of elation; fanaticism, which is faith heightened to folly; and ambition, which is the lure of conscious greatness. Every man of genius, become aware of lofty mission, and indeed every child of fortune, though the sudden gift be but gold, has reflected this experience of the Master, in its allurements if not in its triumphs. Self-confidence, or, if not that, overfaith, or else carnal ambition—it may be all three—struggling for a favored soul—this drama, not seldom tragedy—aye, tragedy for the tempted and often for many others—repeats itself on every page of history and is enacted about us daily. In all that long and fateful soliloquy the Prophet was tempted in all points like ourselves, and thus the struggle

in the wilderness was well fitted to become one of the sublimest and most instructive of His parables. It was doubtless on this account that Jesus adopted the pictorial method in afterward describing to His disciples this crucial testing of His worth. There was no Satan, there were no angels, there were not three successive trials; there was long struggle with faithlessness, fanaticism, and ambition, a real conflict and a genuine victory.

The triumph of the tempted fitted Him for His mission and sent Him forth "that Prophet which was to come" and "the Savior of the world."

That Jesus did not thereupon cease to undergo the stress of temptation, and along these very same lines, is not to be questioned by any but the credulous. It is no more true that He ceased to fight evil suggestion, settling with the tempter once for all, than it is that His struggle was at one time with a visible Satan, in definite successive order of alluring suggestions. Temptation must have returned to Him, as with others, from time to time.

But this was the crisis of decision, this the maelstrom of self-discovery—the brave vaulting into the saddle on hearing the trumpet. The temptations of a great career were here anticipated, epitomized, and thrown into vivid foreshadowing. It was the splendid triumph of initial self-surrender and whole-souled consecration.

Indeed, we know that a moment came later when all this mental conflict took outward form and all these temptations actualized themselves in a great event. Precisely what happened in the soliloquy of the wilderness occurred on the Mount of Olives, when the people called Him to the throne of David. The narrative referred to is so thrilling and significant in this connection, that we may be pardoned for dwelling upon it for a moment. It proves what the Parable of the Temptation pictured, that He, who was to master the world, first had mastered Himself.

Jesus was approaching the Holy City for the last time. Expectation was rife and anxiety strained among the common people,

and all thoughtful Jews were perceiving that Jesus must now show Himself the Christ with a high hand or go down forever before powerful and pitiless foes. His approach to the capital, on this occasion, was a challenge to the Pharisees, a defiance of the Sanhedrim, a provocation for the Roman authorities. He must now seat Himself triumphantly on the throne of David or perish miserably. He had left His hiding-place beyond Jordan, though an outcast, excommunicated and proscribed, and He was entering the city boldly and openly. With Him was Bartimæus, the blind beggar of Jericho restored to sight, with Him Lazarus of Bethany, just called forth alive from a sepulcher. His audacity seemed measureless, His arm was bared, His very words were sharper than two-edged sword. What could avail now hirelings of high priests or of procurator? He must at once proclaim Himself, throw Himself upon Heaven's aid, call forth the twelve legions of angels, summon from the skies chariots of fire, and rule and restore!

The people, so arguing, very naturally

thronged out to meet Him; and when they encountered the long procession of pilgrims and disciples and amid these the Prophet, riding after the foretold manner and ancient custom of kings, their enthusiasm could not contain itself. Pilgrims and disciples caught the contagion. The multitude cast their gala garments in His way, and plucking off palm-branches and waving them in token of expected victory, threw them at His feet. The throng became a triumphal procession, and before and after rose the significant shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! hosanna, in the highest! Blessed be the KING that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest!"

This meant, to all who heard, "Now let the proud Pharisees, the priests, and the scribes bend or break! Away with Pilate and his legionaries! Come, death, grapple with Roman eagle, and come, Victory and National Glory! Victory, victory, terror and dominion from the River unto the Ends of the earth!"

It was the wilderness again, and hunger and

proud elation and sublime ambition assaulting holy genius.

And Jesus?

He expected the ovation, He permitted it—aye, He justified it! When some angry Pharisees bade Him rebuke His disciples and repress the people, He did but reply, “I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out!”

But notice that, while the crowds were shouting with His approval, the Master had burst into tears. He had caught sight of the Holy City and, in sudden dread prophetic vision, He was seeing its overthrow. Yes, He was King indeed, but not to mount throne of ivory or to wield scepter of gold; His crown should be woven of thorns, His scepter a reed, and His throne a cross. He was easily first of all men, but only by having made Himself slave of all. His kingdom was not of this world.

He forgot the shouting multitudes, He ignored the festive way of gala robes and palm-branches and, stretching out yearning arms

toward Jerusalem, He murmured, in His tears, "If thou hadst known the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes!"

As in the wilderness, Satan left Him and angels again ministered to His wants. Ever tempted, now and again, He endured to the end, battling with faithlessness and fanaticism, content with His scepter of righteousness, the throne of His sacrifices and His kingdom of love.

CHAPTER VII

THE MASTER'S CLAIMS

THUS, stated in a general way, Jesus, having discovered Himself, accepted Himself at His own valuation and went forth to His work, feeling on Him the oil of divine consecration, to battle lifelong temptation and to continue until the end of His mission true to Himself.

But it remains for us to ask, before we shall have brought to its logical ending this Second Part of our little treatise, what in particular, what in details, was that Himself which He discovered and to which He must prove true.

For this we must study the records. There is no evidence in these that there was any wavering in His conception of His personality and authority during His brief ministry. There was some growth in apostolic estimate of Him, as we shall soon see, but critical

treatment of the four Gospels will give us no growth in the Master's own apprehension of His dignity of office and Messianic gifts.

What, now, were the claims of Jesus as to Himself? What in detail did He believe Himself to be? He asserted Messianic authority, to what was this equivalent? This chapter will busy itself with these questions.

Jesus of Nazareth has been an enigma for all the ages. His own relatives at one time deemed Him insane (Mark 3: 21). The multitude sometimes described in Him a successor for David and sometimes inferred that He was no better than a Samaritan and had a devil. The Pharisees feared Him as a reformer of abuses by which they profited and as an agitator, who, influencing the passions and arousing the enthusiasm of the common people, might embroil the nation in a hopeless war with Rome. The Romans, on the other hand, not taking Him seriously, considered Him a harmless crank. The guilty King Herod trembled lest he might be John the Baptist come to life again and dangerous.

The disciples, after His death, accepting at last His Messianic assumption, soon placed Him at the right hand of the Throne of God, as the Name, the Logos. To Peter He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, even before His death; to Martha He was, yet living, the "Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." After-ages deified Him.

Our concern now is with none of these estimates of contemporaries and successors, but with His own judgment upon His personality and authority. What did the Master teach about Himself? Directly we can learn this only from careful study of the four gospels, but indirectly we learn something from the Book of Acts and the Epistles.

In the four gospels we find two very distinct characterizations of Jesus. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we have the historical Prophet as He appeared to simple-minded men, His deeds and words reported without comment and in exactness. Indeed, these gospels are mere annals, drawing their material

from older crystallized tradition (Luke 1: 1), oral or written, and hence, as having sources in common, identical in spirit, method, and much of substance. In these, Jesus appears with scarcely any variation of point of view, saying and doing practically the same things. The three streams of tradition run nearly parallel, and the Christ of these "synoptists" is one singularly luminous personality, a living and real being, intensely Himself.

The fourth Gospel (John's) furnishes quite another point of view, and far from being a mere collection of sayings and anecdotes, it is a philosophical treatise, presenting the fact and problem of Jesus with running comment in fulfilment of a definite purpose clearly stated (John 20: 21). It is, in short, a sacred commentary, the author playing the part of a Greek chorus to disentangle the plot and explain the motive. So frequent is the occurrence of explanation and elucidation that the reader is often embarrassed to distinguish between the comments of the writer and the actual utterances ascribed to the Master.

Such comments will be found in John 1: 1-5, 7-14, 16-18; 2: 21, 22; 3: 13-21(?), 34-36; 6: 6, 65-71; 7: 39; 8: 20 (last clause); 11: 13, 42(?), 51, 52; 12: 38-41; 13: 3, 27 (first clause); 18: 9; 19: 24 (explanatory clause), 36, 37; 20: 30, 31.

A good illustration of this difficulty in disentanglement of discourse from comment will be found in the conversation with Nicodemus, and one may fairly ask with some uncertainty whether John 3: 21 is to be credited to the author or to the Prophet. In at least one saying (11: 42), perhaps by error of transcribers, comment surely epexegetical has worked into the Master's very speech, and appears in the first person.

Moreover, the fourth Gospel cannot escape a suspicion of philosophic bias. Whatever the opening verses of the book may mean, whether that Jesus was an emanation of the Deity, or the Deity in person, or only filled and inspired by the Divine Logos (or Reason), it ought not to be questioned that the influence of Philo and of Platonism is discernible. The best

critical judgment of to-day places the composition of the Gospel of John at an early date, surely not later than the second century, and not too far away from trustworthy narration, and we are disposed to view the material as substantially historical. Here evidently, however, we are dealing with history from the point of view of the commentator, who had begun to muse upon the facts. The life of the Prophet has come to submit itself to philosophic interpretation and theological speculation. The fourth Gospel is not mentioned in the writings of Papias, Polycarp, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, or Ignacius. John the Apostle could not have been its author, at least in the present form; as, however much of the terminology and local coloring remind us of the "Beloved" Apostle's First Epistle, it is far from improbable that the substance of the narrative and discourse came really from his hand, to undergo, at a later date, a recension in the interest of philosophical speculation and of practical commentary. Beyond reasonable question the closing chapter must be deemed

a subsequent addition and by still another author.

The Jesus of the fourth Gospel is pictured as a sublime genius, lifted far above all around Him, living a hidden life, walking alone with God, a teacher who only so far as possible admits His disciples to fellowship in His aspirations, faiths, and purposes, but who appeals to spirituality generally in vain—a being in-breathed of the Spirit of God, who only now and then revealed to the devout, and in moments of their loftiest flight of thought, the esoteric aspects of His teaching and work.

Nor is there anything unlikely or even suspicious in this portrayal; indeed, improbability would rather rest on any theory of fictitious invention, for who but a very Christ, in that age, could have conceived and outlined this sublime personality? It is not unlikely that there were sides of character in so colossal a genius which such simple-minded collectors of annals did but faintly or not at all discern, and which might, to a more spiritual nature,

furnish a divine ideal and lend itself to philosophical treatment.

According to the synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Jesus claimed that He was Master, that is, Teacher; and in the memorabilia compiled by these authors, this Master always emphasized the scholastic I and spake with authority, not like the scribes, in mere explanation of those of olden times, but in emendation of the most sacred of the seers of the past. He was a physician and came to heal the "sick." He was "that Prophet which was to appear," greater than Elijah and John the Baptist, Herald of the Kingdom of God. He was the "Son of Man," or typical humanity; He was the "Son of God," or typical piety. He was the very Christ, the foretold Messiah (the Anointed), and hence a King, "of a kingdom appointed of the Father." He was antitype of that "servant" mentioned in Isaiah 52. He was Lord over the Sabbath and greater than the Temple.

Still, He did nothing of Himself, and in all things was the Ambassador of God, and He

cast out devils and did many mighty works “by the Spirit of God” and “by the Finger of God.” Claiming no perfection, He rebuked a young man for calling Him “good,” insisting that “there is none good but One.” Though a Seer of great scope of vision, yet He knew not “that day.” He had authority to declare forgiveness, but was no judge for settling legal disputes (Mark 2: 5, where one must notice that the perfect is used, “thy sins have been forgiven thee.” See also Luke 5: 23, 24). Nor was it His province “to give, who should sit on His right hand and on His left hand, in His kingdom” (Matth. 11: 40). He predicted that He would be scourged and crucified, would die and be three days buried, and arise on the third day; that He would ultimately “sit upon a throne of glory,” and would “come again,” “in the glory of His Father, with the Holy Angels.” All was to happen in “this generation,” and to be part of the orderly procedure in the setting up of His kingdom. He bade the exorcised Gadarene to tell his friends “how great things the Lord

had done for him," clearly referring not to Himself but to the Lord God. In a spirit of charity, strangely contrasting the theory and method of the Christian Church in a later age, He warned His disciples not to reprove a reformer who was casting out devils in His name simply because "he followeth not us" (Mark 9: 38). He distinguished between the Divine Spirit and Himself by asserting that, while a sin against the Son of Man might be forgiven, "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness."

It was in keeping with this modesty of His claims that Luke should tell how, on a certain day when multitudes pressed Him, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them." Nor was there any incongruity in His rebuke to Peter, when, at the crisis of His life, He assured the doughty apostle, "Thinkest thou that I can not now pray my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Mark went even so far as to limit His miracle-working power with conditions of success, external entirely to Himself, in the

declaration that at Nazareth, on an occasion, He "could do no mighty work (stronger in the Greek, οὐκ ἠδύνατο, He was not able)," Matthew, in a parallel passage, explaining that this was owing to unbelief. Undoubtedly, Luke stated what was at once the general conviction of the disciples and the Master's own interpretation of the success of His power when he wrote, "And Jesus returned, *in the power of the Spirit*, into Galilee." The multitudes, though not questioning His claims, formed the same conclusions as to His superiority; and when, after the utter failure of the disciples, the demoniac was healed by Him, "they were all amazed *at the mighty power of God.*" On the only occasion recorded when He was addressed by an over-zealous person in that strain of adulation which so soon became the habit of the Christian Church and the keynote of Christian theology, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee and the paps which Thou hast sucked," He replied (as earlier in this treatise we have reminded the reader) in language of caustic rebuke, "Yea, rather,

blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it!" a saying which ought to have rendered forever impossible Mariolatry and the worship of the crucifix.

In the fourth gospel (John's) Jesus appears still as Master, as Physician, as Son of Man, as Son of God, the Christ, and the King; but here, in addition, He claims to be the True Vine, the Living Bread, the Door, the Way, the Living Resurrection, and the Good Shepherd. Preeminently He is the Savior, the Lifegiver. He is the Sent, "which came down from Heaven" "before Abraham was I AM!" He has "power to lay down and to take up His life." He is in perfect unison with the Father, in His Spirit and in His purpose: "I and the Father are One" (this, in John 10: 30, interpreted in light of what follows, evidently means that Jesus is in harmony with God, and not that He is God, and notice how this is enlarged upon in 14: 10.) "He is in Me and I in Him." Jesus is represented as knowing all men, He is to be "lifted up," and then, "shall draw all men unto Him." He will prepare a

place for His disciples and then come again and receive them unto Himself. Of the world He will be the Judge (5: 22, 23).

All this is no claim to Godhood, for He tells His followers that their God is His God, and He confesses that "of Himself He can do nothing," that He speaks only "as He hears," judging only as "the Father hath taught Him"; He "seeks not of His own will," He came down from Heaven in the Father's Name" and will "leave the world and return to the Father." He is a *man* that "hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day." "The works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witness of me." Very effective is the striking confession made to His disciples on that last night in which He was betrayed, "the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." We are not surprised,

therefore, that at the grave of Lazarus He prayed and gave thanks in these significant words, "Father, I thank Thee, that Thou hast heard me!" nor that John the Baptist is represented as explaining His power in the declaration, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him!" It is most noteworthy that in all our Master's discourses there is no reference whatever to an Immaculate Conception, a remarkable nativity, a chorus of angels, or a coming of Magi. Neither Jesus, nor the disciples, the scribes, nor the multitude, by word or conduct, are recorded as evincing any memory or consciousness of such a series of events antedating His public ministry, and which, if historical, would seemingly have been of important bearing in their eyes upon His claims, His authority, and His success.

The Book of Acts furnishing us the point of view and the averments of the Master's intimates, throws light upon the claims of Jesus only less luminous than His own remembered and recorded words. The author, probably

Luke, declares that it was through the Holy Ghost Jesus had given commandments unto His disciples (Acts 1: 2). Peter describes Him as a “man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you”—both “Lord and Christ”; “a Prophet, like unto Moses”; “exalted to be Prince and Savior”; “ordained of God to be Judge of quick and dead.” The Book of Acts states of Paul “that he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God”; “a man, whom God hath ordained”; “a Savior of the seed of David.”

In the Epistles, we find no incontestable advance upon this teaching, the few passages which seem to favor that apotheosis of the Master, which the church in course of ages declared, being misunderstood or evidently interpolations of later theology. (1 John 5: 7 is clearly an interpolation.) Never is lost to sight the distinction between the Deity and our “Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” It is not to be denied that in the later of Paul’s epistles there is some progress away from the

simplicity of the Christology as given us in the Book of Acts, and toward those subtle conceptions of His person which soon prevailed in the early Church, as in 1 Tim. 3: 16, which seems to quote a simple creed; but the most striking expressions of the apostle's glowing hero-worship fall far short of the claims of the Nicene Creed.

Probably the Epistle to the Hebrews, by an unknown author and subsequent to Paul's latest, furnishes the most elaborate Christology of the New Testament, but even this distinguishes clearly between the man Jesus and the Eternal God, and at most, even in this conception of Him, He is but the typical High Priest, the Intercessor, among creatures second to none created.

That the claims of Jesus, even when formulated by His disciples and warmest admirers when alive, fall short of the portrayals of the great Christian creeds—the Athanasian, the Nicene, and even the so-called Apostles'—must appear on the surface. Admitting the credibility of all the Gospels, and allowing no

shadow to fall upon John's sublime conception of the Christ there still remains a yawning gulf between the Prophet's interpretation of Himself and the deified Savior of the subsequent ages. The candid student will find in the gospels a creation of personality, luminous, intense, unique, but quite other than the metaphysical subtlety of the Nicene creed, of the monophysite controversy, or of modern Trinitarian orthodoxy.

Though gifted with prophetic insight to a high degree, on His own admission, Jesus was not omniscient, and though capable of healing certain diseases and of working what seemed wonders, He never presumed to possession of omnipotence. Even His so-called miracles, far from being an exercise of might wholly superior in kind and intensity to occasional triumph of faith, from His own point of view belonged to a class of phenomena quite possible in every age and clime. Jesus considered Himself in regard to these unusual gifts as but one in a noble army of heroes and martyrs, who were in wonder-working only his prede-

cessors; and He anticipated a multitude of followers of like endowment.

In short, Jesus was not, Himself being the judge, the luminary so much as a lens; His soul was translucent, the Deity streamed through Him, and in the passage the Divine light was focused with great vividness upon matters that concerned His mission and His message.

He was King, but many kings had preceded Him and would follow. He was what Homer styled Agamemnon at Troy, "basileuteros," that is, "more a king" than the other Greek sovereigns.

It may be of interest to place alongside of the Prophet's own apprehension of His personality the interpretation of a singularly pure and spiritual mind, whose Oriental training and heritage peculiarly fitted him to understand and to respond to Jesus of Nazareth. Chunder Sen, a recent head of the Brahmo Somaj, drew an equal-sided triangle with one apex erect and thus commented upon it: "The apex is the very God Jehovah, the

Supreme Brahma of the Vedas. Alone, in His own Eternal Glory He dwelleth. From Him comes down the Son in a direct line, an Emanation of the Divinity. Thus God descends and touches one end of the base of humanity, then running all along the base permeates the world, and then by power of the Holy Ghost drags humanity to Himself. Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son; Divinity carrying up humanity is the Holy Ghost. The Creator, the Exemplar, the Sanctifier! I am, I love, I save! The Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God! Force, Wisdom, Holiness! The True, the Good, the Beautiful."

We have now completed our study of the development of Jesus, of the dawning of His religious consciousness, of His self-discovery as the promised Messiah, of His acceptance of His so perilous mission, and of the nature of His resulting claims.

In our Third Part, we will discuss the teachings of Jesus, what He felt Himself sent to communicate, His message.

PART THIRD
WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

CHAPTER VIII

THE MESSAGE

THE Message of Jesus, which He Himself called His evangel, or glad tidings, and which the Anglo-Saxons translated into the grand old word “gospel” (good spell—joyful announcement), has been reported to us by the evangelists, as they are most properly called, with substantial agreement, and yet from the same different points of view already noted in their portrayal of His personality. The synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) give us the gospel of the Kingdom, the author of John the gospel of Salvation. The two messages are the same, essentially, but neither is just what is meant to-day by “gospel preaching,” and both are intense with the unique personality of the Herald.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the glad tidings are summed up in the words, “The

time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel.” When the Twelve were commissioned to go forth and evangelize, their instructions were only “to preach the Kingdom and heal the sick.” The Seventy were ordained “to heal the sick and say unto the people, ‘the Kingdom of God is nigh unto you.’” In the form of prayer, “Our Father,” suggested as a useful pattern for verbal devotion, there is no doctrinal reference except to the Kingdom, to forgiveness, to avoidance of temptation, and to deliverance from evil (the Evil One?). Luke records that ‘the people followed Him, . . . and He received them and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.’” His last words to His disciples were a general injunction to preach in His Name, “Repentance and Remission of Sins among all nations.” The author of the book of Acts reports Him as promising His followers, in absolutely His last earthly communication, that “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is

come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." To this, perhaps, ought to be added the communication to Saul of Tarsus, on the way to Damascus, as repeated by Paul in his address before Agrippa: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto you, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith which is in me."

The gospel of the Book of John does not ignore this heralding of the Kingdom, but it further emphasizes salvation. The Master herein declares the world lost, and affirms that Himself has come to save. Preeminently He is the Savior of the world, both from sin and from punishment; the escape is through faith and the result Æonian Life. Indeed,

the author explicitly declares that his account was written with the express purpose of unfolding this truth, "But these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His Name." Hence, we find the Master reported in this evangel as saying that "He came to bear witness to the truth, and that men through Him might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This life, strictly speaking, was a new kind of living, a sort of spiritual regeneration, resurrection from spiritual death, attained by a process of new birth; and upon it, thus begotten by the Spirit of God, should descend the Spirit's blessing in heavenly influence, working in the heart peace, joy, and love.

There is, in substance, nothing more to the Message. The evangel of Jesus only furnishes an intense emphasis upon the fundamental principles of universal religion, giving us no organized body of divinity; it is simply the science of religion applied with

perfect insight and sublime faith to the soul of man and to the conditions of human society.

Of the Fall, of Total Depravity, of Inability, of Election, of Irresistible Grace, of Atonement by Appeasement, of Substitution, and of similar metaphysical subtleties in vogue at a later day, there is no word and no hint.

Well said Henry Ward Beecher, "Creed-makers have treated their Bibles as men do sheep, shearing the wool to make thread, dyeing the thread for the shuttle, and working the shuttle in the loom, to create every fabric that invention can conceive, all the while declaring that these fabrics and patterns all grew on the sheep's back."

It does not follow, of course, that well-spun dogmas are untrue, but only that these must rest for support on other evidence than the teachings of Jesus.

Just here, however, a caution is in order. There is some danger that the critic, in the interest of fairness, will attribute too much to the silences of the Master. It must not be

concluded that His failure to speak positively on any subject indicated either ignorance, indifference, or disbelief. The silences of Jesus, though in some cases no doubt significant, could not always have been so; often they may have indicated only unwillingness to illumine dark problems not yet in current discussion, or to anticipate standpoints of thought and social, ecclesiastical, and theological conditions of the remote future. As the Master was far from being all-seeing, many problems vital to us now may never have entered His conscious scope of vision. Jesus dealt with the issues of the day, and His preaching was the practical application of the eternal principles of morality and Divine grace to common and every-day situations and conditions to be observed around Him.

While we may not infer his condemnation of any doctrine or reform from His silence touching it, neither may we, presuming upon our confidence in the soundness of our own views, ascribe to him a supposititious advocacy

of them. Jesus may well have said much more than what has been reported—nay, surely did so (John 21: 25); but to the record we must adhere, and we are permitted to ascribe to Him neither more nor less.

Especially is it true that we are not justified in holding Jesus to what seems to us the logical consequences of His recorded sayings. The application of our logic to the Master's teaching, and the consequent additions of numberless scholia and corollaries of our own deduction, has wrought wild work in the realm of theology and in the unfoldings of history.

As to the historical creeds, it is wholly unrighteous to claim the Master's authority for any of them, from the so-called Apostles' down. Dogmas may seem to us vital and may seem to spring logically out of His sayings, and on that account may be entitled to all the weight which comes from a sober, honest reasoning; but creeds which formulate these dogmas for general subscription are always

inert, to use Bushnell's phrase, "the jerked meat of salvation." After long strife, and in the spirit of compromise, were they drawn up, and then only did they live. No sooner were they embodied than they became outgrown, to remain the fossilized strata of former doctrinal history, the evidence of bitter conflict, the shibboleths of bigotry, and the weapons of savage attack. They now survive as mere forms, and too often perpetuate the rancor of minute disagreements which long since ceased to have even a theoretical meaning. Even their significance is obscure and to be interpreted only by very learned scholars. They are curious and precious heirlooms, like the rusty armor of ancient castles, which keep alive memories of strife. As historical documents they are of vast interest and value, but as standards for subscription they serve only to cripple energies of thought among the devout and to narrow the range of their sympathies. Just so, the palaces of Babylon were splendid erections of art, but are now in ruins mostly tumbled into the river, swelling the

Euphrates in a swamp, rendering navigation impossible, and filling the region with malarial diseases; the débris of grand discussions of days gone by block the channels of thought and progress and cause aspiration and sympathy to stagnate.

Creeds—never meaning more than they say, as their wording was the language of diplomacy—never meaning as much even as they seem to say, their articles having resulted from compromise and each party having yielded to the others verbally so far as honesty permitted, and often farther than honesty permitted—are to be interpreted with much reading between the lines, based on accurate knowledge of the circumstances and forces of their origination, and to be valued for what is true in them. They should not be referred back to Jesus as authority.

In the creed-making faculty the Master was wholly lacking. He was a radical, a dissenter by inmost nature, a sharp critic of all institutions and keen challenger of all assumptions. Little He cared for old-time formulas. “Ye

have heard that it hath been said by them of olden time, but I say unto you . . . ”—in such word and spirit of revolution He breathed forth His defiance to the inertia of tradition and the bondage of symbols.

CHAPTER IX

THE MESSAGE ANALYZED

IT is thus a mistake to suppose that Jesus brought to light new truths. Indeed, not one of the fundamental postulates of the religion He taught was absolutely novel. He spoke with authority, but not to invent nor to discover and only to emphasize and apply.

His ethical code was but that universal law of love which baffles nature's struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, and which guarantees civilization—that great ethical generalization which was made by many ancient moralists, and which was clearly enunciated by Moses, Socrates, Confucius, Gautama, and other sages of the olden time. Sophocles had prayed, "Oh, that my lot might be cast in the path of holy innocence of thought and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws which in the highest heaven had their birth, neither

did the race of mortal man beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep; the power of God is mighty in them and groweth not old!" Cicero had declared, "Virtue herself ought to attract you by her own charm to true glory!" The Golden Rule, at least in its negative form, was known to both the Hindoos and the Chinese. The Vedas prescribed that "Virtue must be practised, therefore let no one do to other what he would not have done to himself." The motto of Zoroastrianism was "Think purely, speak purely, act purely!" and the Fire-worshippers believed in a fatal Bridge of Judgment over which the souls only of the just could pass into Paradise. This was the clear teaching of both Buddhism and Confucianism. "It is the Way of Tao," proclaimed Laotse, "to recompense injury with kindness." The Japanese have a very old proverb to the effect "that the Throne of the Gods is upon the brow of the righteous man!"

Monotheism, the belief in one God, was already, in Christ's day, thousands of years old, while the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and

all the Aryans had conceived of Deity as a Father. In Egypt, back of the foolish mythology, the sacred apes and crocodiles, the divine bulls and holy cats, great spectral truths loomed up for the initiated. We find such inscriptions as these: "Rock of Truth is His Name," "I AM, that was and is and is to be, and my veil no mortal hath yet drawn aside." In esoteric circles God was called "Father," "Giver of Life," "Toucher of the Hearts," "Searcher of the inward parts."

In the Vedas, the Sky-God is Dyaus Pitar (Zeus Pater in the Greek, Jupiter in the Latin languages), that is, Sky Father; and we read, "There is One Eternal Thinker, thinking non-eternal thoughts. He, though One, fulfils the desire of many; the wise, who perceive Him in themselves, to them belongs eternal life, eternal peace."

Plato had declared of the Deity, "Truth is His body and light is His shadow;" "In God is no injustice at all, He is altogether just, and there is nothing more like Him than that man of us who is the most just. To know this is

true wisdom and manhood, and the ignorance of this is too plainly folly and vice. All other kinds of wisdom, which only seem such, as the wisdom of politicians or the wisdom of arts, are coarse and vulgar."

It goes without saying that the audiences which Jesus addressed, nourished as they were on readings from the book of Psalms, from Deuteronomy and the prophecies of Isaiah, found no novelty in even a very lofty ethical and religious point of view. To the Hebrew, for ages, the good man had seemed a sage, the bad man a fool, virtue was the only wisdom, and rejection of the Living and True God mere imbecility. Even the notion of a Heavenly Kingdom, as picture of a reign of righteousness among men, far from being original with John the Baptist and Jesus, was the old Hebrew God-king (theocratic) conception of government spiritualized. Zoroaster taught that the Kingdom of Ormutz was at hand, and that "the fulness of time" having come, the age was to be judged, Satan cast out, and a new age begun.

Future life for the soul, with resurrection of the body, were passionate beliefs of the entire Egyptian people from time immemorial. Satan the Devil, demons, guardian angels, and a pot of torture for the damned, were familiar and time-honored ideas, when Jesus was born, in the East.

No marvel, then, if Clement of Alexandria said concerning Greek philosophy, "It is clear, that the same God, to whom we owe the Old and New Testaments, gave also the Greeks their Greek philosophy, by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks." And Augustine, that father of ultra-Calvinistic orthodoxy, concluded, "What is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian."

Jesus Himself claimed no rare originality as a Teacher, and in His doctrine He only made advance in clearness of statement and in force of application upon those who had

gone on before. When the Jews marveled at His utterance and asked, "Whence knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"—that is, "How knoweth this man learning, never having been educated?"—He replied, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Which could mean nothing else but that He was uttering fundamental truth, such as spiritual minds can unearth.

We propose now to analyze the Message, not to deduce dogmas by logical process, but to disentangle the threads of the fabric and to compare its simple elements with one another and with the same or similar views as held, more or less feebly, by contemporaries and the immediate predecessors of the Prophet.

We shall find the truths involved very elemental, but of intense interest when reviewed with reference to the emphasis the Master puts upon them.

The first postulate upon which the Teacher

insisted and which underlies all His instruction, is that inference of purity and spirituality inevitable as the human mind grows in wisdom and in grace with the ages, that God loves!

The goodness attributed to Deity by Hebrew prophets and heathen sages had, after all, been only a view from a mountain-top seen by those who could climb, and which these scarce dared talk about before the masses of men, who were incapable of grasping such esoteric thought. Nothing in the popular life of the Jews ever had responded to the lofty conception, nothing in Greek or popular Roman heathenism had shown its influence. Jesus gave the thought to everybody, and started a movement toward personal purity and piety which furnished soil for the rare seed.

Jesus taught His disciples a daily prayer to "Our Father," and knowing that this very ancient analogy between parental love and the Divine goodness was an imperfect one, He improved upon it by contrasting the earthly affection with the Divine: "If ye, being evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your heavenly Father!"

The Prophet must have known that in emphasizing this truth, however universal to spirituality, He was running counter to the facts of experience, counter to the passions and conduct of men, and in defiance of the seeming, the surface teaching (and surface teaching of things is all that most men regard) of natural law and occurrence. To write on the wall of a tomb for the eyes of dreamers an averment of the Fatherhood of God was one thing, and to face human life and human conduct with such a dogma, as the practical norm of everyday action and the perpetual stay of faith, quite another.

Stop and think upon the hardihood of this.

Is God love? A thousand voices in nature deny it even probability; chilling blasts of despair would freeze away its warmth; sorrow in billows roll over and drown it out; all kinds of religious rust, mildew, and blight, eat into, break up, and kill. There even seems no planting-room for a truth like this in our busy,

merry, wicked, sad, and weary world. You no sooner aver that God is Love, than some wiseacre, some misanthrope, denies it. It has been disproved scholastically a million times at least, it has been doubted more often than the sun has risen. "Does God love?" we are asked, "when He sends the earthquake to overturn the erections of genius and to shatter and engulf cities and villages in living burial? Is the volcano, belching forth lava and suffocating fumes, upheaving the ocean in tidal waves to roll death over the peaceful, lovely landscape and which the Psalmist says comes 'at His touch,' the voice of His mercy? And when the hurricane strands the merchandise of busy seaports and converts some Garden of Eden into a howling wilderness, is the breath of its fury the expiration of His goodness? Pestilence, famine, and war, are they the thoughts of His benevolence? Where is he, who has not endured wrong and suffered pain? When has any age been unshadowed by bloodshed, poverty, and injustice?"

Doubtless Jesus lost none of the force of this

argument, yet He responded, "God loves; our Father, in His love, puts all earthly affection to shame; He is more than Father."

And everywhere, in all subsequent ages, faith, when sublimed, has responded to His averment with a shout of assurance, "Aye, God is Love and the Father more than a Father!" All our churches have been built on this, however often they may have departed from the truth; noble enthusiasms of every kind have, since the Master's day, been lit by this torch. This living germ of doctrine has taken root in many lands, until lo! it has become a mere weed, growing by the wayside. You can not prove it. It is ultimate. You simply recognize it, like the laws of logic innate in us. It must be true. The earthquake may quiver and the volcano roar, and pestilence slay and famine depopulate; men, in their nobler moods, find it not only easy but necessary to believe that God is good. It is a living seed, plant it, scatter it, let it be wafted on all winds, it will care for itself and it will prevail.

Jesus no more invented this truth than He discovered religion. He saw clearly, stated vividly, and applied fearlessly. It was the perceived starting-point for His glad tidings.

The second postulate in the teaching of the Master was a mere corollary of the first, but of supreme importance in a world of defective aims and unholy motives, namely, that God forgives!

God forgives!

Here, again, the Teacher seemed to deny science and pervert fact in the interest of optimism. The great ethical dramatists—Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides—were against Him; popular skepticism despaired of such blessed assurance. “It is impossible,” said ethical science, “for justice to condone wrong. Law can not be broken with impunity, it exacts the letter of the bond. Evil is a cause, a karma, and, like other causes, must work out its own inevitable results. Nemesis is relentless, and cruel as the grave. Forgiveness is a dream of the weak and of the wicked.”

Yet, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses!" Notice that He carefully guarded His utterance, which was of that kind of truth which easily runs into fanaticism. He did not compromise the Divine justice by any irrational offer of absolution—no true prophet ever did or will. In order that the Divine forgiveness might avail, Jesus taught that the seeker was to "repent." In pardon of sins God did not sacrifice any moral interest, nor violate the sanctity of law, nor sully the majesty of government; He forgave only the penitent. No seer ever denounced unsubdued and unrepentant sinfulness with keener indignation, nor foretold in more vivid imagery its utter overthrow, than did the Founder of the Christian religion. He was just as truly the Prophet of retribution as of salvation. It was this combination made His denunciations so terrible—His gentleness made more searching the word of rebuke, His intense conception of the Divine goodness formed foil, when indignant, for His humanity. The vivid impression made by this upon

His disciples survived in the startling phrase, "The wrath of the Lamb."

The mercy of God was the atmosphere which the righteous breathed in life, the sunshine in which their souls bathed day by day. He knew of no perfection, though in Matth. 5: 48 he urged His followers to be "τελείοι," that is, complete, well rounded in character; and He ever recognized the imperfections of all earthly beings, even the holiest. It was not pessimism but sublime ideality which caused Him to assure the young ruler: "There is none good, save One!" From His point of view, no gentlest saint bowing over wounded on field of battle, no boldest hero declaring the truth though the heavens fall upon him, no martyr amid flames forgiving his persecutors, might claim before the Judgment Bar anything but the Divine forbearance.

It is most significant that this dogma, that God forgives, has outstood the blasts of twenty centuries of science, skepticism, and despair. To-day it touches the noble nature, melts the hard heart, reclaims the wayward and encour-

ages the good, just as in the days of Isaiah, just as in the times of Jesus. Justice Divine still appears to be not Law taking vengeance but Love maintaining Law, and moral law itself is but the compulsion of love. A thousand treatises in ethics can not prevent the penitent from outstretched hands as the words go forth spontaneously, "O God, Heart of God, have mercy upon us!" And science, though unable to explain, bows the head and muses.

The third elemental truth in the Message was that of Brotherhood, expressed in what we call the Golden Rule, and which simply insisted that men should be just and merciful to each other.

God loves and will forgive; man must love and forgive. God is Father, men are brethren.

This seemed to the people of Christ's time rank nonsense. Social fraternity was as far from the realm of the practical as social equality. Society was organized into differ-

ences of position, opportunity, and worth. There were rulers, noblemen, common people, and slaves. Your own citizens were the unit and you an atom dissolved into the whole, of no consequence except to the State. Those of your own language were civilized, and those of other tongues barbarians. All outside your frontiers were robbers and pirates; and it was right to slay them.

And, inside your own group, the perpetual theme of satire's bitterness was man's inhumanity to man, which, then as always, "made countless thousands mourn."

For a Jew to be told that he must love Pharisees, forgive his Roman oppressors, let his slave go free, and be considerate toward the mean, cowardly, and cruel of his own kin, must have appeared to him the prattle of a fool.

Yet upon such folly Jesus insisted with all the moral fervor of His nature. Once, when His mother and His brethren stood without, as He addressed a throng of the people, He asked the messengers, or the ushers, "Who is

my mother? and who are my brethren?" as if to teach them that the spirit of humanity was supreme and must surmount all racial, national, civic, tribal, and even family prejudice and preference.

One of the most noteworthy sayings of the Teacher put this with tremendous emphasis: "Whosoever is angry with his brethren without a cause"—note that this was a very grave offense on any ethical standard—"shall be in danger of the judgment"—which was the local judicatory (as we might say, the County Court),—"and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca" (vain fellow, empty head, a much less heinous offense), "shall be in danger of the Council," which was the Sanhedrim, the general and supreme court of the land; "but whosoever shall say, Thou fool"—the least conceivable offense of inhumanity—"shall be in danger of hell-fire!" Here, on the one side, we run down from wrath, through abuse, to mere ill nature; while, on the other side of the contrast, we run up from a local indictment, through a national arraignment,

to the Judgment Bar of the universe. So, by ever lessening the fault and ever increasing the liability, the Prophet, with immense emphasis, condemned the merest shadow of inhumanity. The rebuke rolls up from a cloud no bigger than a man's hand to a thunder-storm. For brotherhood must be supreme.

A comparison of the ethical point of view of Jesus with the standpoints of contemporary and preceding systems will prove of much significance. His conception is by far the most comprehensive. From the beginning of the world superior men had cherished the notion of some nobility of soul, possible to all, yet attained only by a few, and in these imperfectly present—one pearl of great price, to obtain which a man might well sell all that he had. They had given various names to this and had described it according to their tastes, habits, needs, and spirituality of conception, thereby uttering volumes concerning their mental traits and social proclivities. The Greeks had named virtue arete, from

Ares, their god of war; the Latins had used the word *virtus*, from *vir*, a hero. Nobility of soul with both these kindred and gifted races was herohood, the predominance of manly qualities, warlike prowess, bodily courage, stoical endurance of pain and hardship, fidelity to the State, and, in short, whatever made the hardy and victorious soldier. The Greek philosophers, from a loftier outlook than that of the people at large, pronounced this supreme quality of character justice, meaning thereby the harmonious pose of all powers of body, mind, and heart in perfect symmetry of life; a virtuous man was a living poem, in faultless flowing measure, or a statue of fine outlines. This justice was something that could be taught, for it was inconceivable that any man should persist in being unnatural, ungraceful, and contradictory, if only he was clearly shown the better way; vice and crime were kinds of ignorance of the true harmonies of living. Hence the lofty educational mission of philosophy. The Buddhists sought nobility of soul in self-denial and a chaste, simple, and

frugal existence. The Hebrews of the olden time described the soul's nobility by the word Wisdom, which was a kind of far-reaching prudence in the conduct of men.

In Jesus, first of all moralists, there appeared a complete comprehension of man as a moral being, in both the ethical and religious bearings of life; and by Him the whole matter was engrossed, and for all time, in the sublime precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The cynicism, which scorned this ideal in the days of Jesus, did not succumb to His sublime declaration. The despairing continued to point to those hypocrites who tithing mint robbed widows and orphans, to the wrongs in social relation, and to the cruelties of history; and when the scientists came they sighed assent, and they said, "Yes, man is a reformed ape, his very morality but refined selfishness, his paws more soft but his claws more sharp; and life continues to be a strug-

gle for existence, only war veiled, and still as brutal as the growl of the apeman or the scratchings of cats. An eminent British scientist, several years ago, in "Nature," declared that if he were required to give some logical ground for the ideas of right and wrong, and some sufficient reason why any man should not sin against his sense of justice and harm his neighbor, if he so desired, he, for one, could not do it.

Yet, the Golden Rule of Jesus has held its own. Manners have grown gentler by it, hard hearts have softened, cruel ways have passed on, private feuds have ceased, battles are followed by mercy toward the vanquished, slavery dies out, international law flourishes, international courtesies multiply, war has come to seem brutal and intolerable, and, in short, men on the average are kinder, more generous, and more just. Nor is there any form of virtue but that it assumes sacrificial expression, from the mother's love for her child and the hero's suffering for his country, and the martyr's dying for his faith, down to

the hidden opening of the left hand in charity, or the low utterance of a mere word of kindness. No virtue now anywhere but costs time, strength, and tears, and because all virtue is some form of love, expressing itself in Christian brotherhood. No doubt these statements should be qualified by the fact that increasing light multiplies responsibility, and that, in view of the present ethical enlightenment, men may be, all things considered, no better on the average than their fathers even of remote ancestry. It is possible that a just judgment would deal out to us as many stripes as to our heathen forebears. But no one can deny that the fact of each man's right to equality of opportunity in life and the duty of general fraternity, in short, the claims of Christian brotherhood, are to-day recognized as never before. People of to-day admire the beautiful face, praise the brilliant intellect, make merry over sparkling wit, and toss their hats and shout when greatness passes by, but they reserve their inmost and profoundest homage for humanity. Instinctively, they know

that medals and crosses of decoration are no fitting rewards for benevolence, and so to this they give the heart's deference; and, although they may fawn on the wicked from motives of fear or self-interest, they inwardly reprobate their characters, hate and despise them.

Fairly judged men may not, on the average, have improved in virtue, but the standard has risen to meet the sublimity of the Master's conception.

One more pearl of truth makes up the rosary for faith's repetition, in acceptance of the Message. The Teacher's gospel involved sanction, and a discriminative future for man's soul. Jesus plainly taught that there was life after death, and that the post-mortem existence was the ethical sequence of the earthly career.

Of course, this was no more original with Jesus than the other postulates, and yet there was much that was novel in the teaching of the Master on this subject.

It is safe to say that when the Christian era

came in, no belief on the subject of a future life anywhere gave much comfort to the dying or any encouragement to the well. Vergil did but reflect the general statement of the most spiritual of his compeers when he caused Charon to say to Æneas, concerning the underworld, "This is the region of ghosts, of sleep, and of drowsy night." And before him, still more significant, had been Homer's pictures of the dead; for those vivid portraitures at that time continued to represent the standard faith of the classic world, were repeated at every festival and on common days in the market-place, and were to the polite and to the "many" the most ancient and trustworthy information on the subject.

"In eternal cloud
And darkness. Never does the glorious sun
Look on them with his rays; when he goes up
Into the starry sky, nor when again
He sinks from heaven to earth. Unwholesome night
O'erhangs the wretched race."

Thus Ulysses described what he beheld in the region of shadows, as his sacrifice to the dead progressed:

“Thronging round me came

Souls of the dead from Erebus,—young wives

And maids unwedded,—men worn out with years

And toil,—and virgins of a tender age,—

In their new grief,—and many a warrior slain

In battle, mangled with the spear, and clad

In bloody armor; who all about the trench

Flitted on every side, now here, now there,

With gibbering cries; and I grew pale with fear!”

Of the unburied dead all antiquity surmised only the most distressing restlessness. Æneas learned what men in Vergil’s day generally believed: “They wander a hundred years and flutter about these shores.” Men died with courage, with stoicism, with insensibility, but without hope. Even Jews of the olden time had asked mournfully, “If a man die will he live again?”

The rabbis of Jesus’s day pictured a heaven and a Place of Torment in gross imagery, insisting upon a future life and furnishing minute details. But it is not recorded that even the most sanctimonious Pharisees were overeager to venture into the dark valley, while it was notorious that the Sadducees laughed to scorn the dreams of the clergy.

While Jesus thus did not invent the dogma of immortality, to use a biblical phrase, He "brought it to light." He made the unseen world real to faith, and brought tenderly near the future, appealing to faith and kindling hope. He showed this life to be for the righteous only a:

"Suburb of the life elysian
Whose portal we call death!"

For His followers, that underworld of the heathen was to prove an upperworld—that region of shadows, drowsiness, shivering, and pain, a land of light, peace, and intense life. He converted a fugitive and timorous philosophy into a lively faith.

As to the fate of the wicked, He invented no alleviations of the rabbinical severity. There would be Judgment, and so rigid the standard and its application, that even for every idle word one would be compelled to give account, at that Day. His contribution to the current conception of torment was in one simple and thrilling assertion, which was highly pictorial. He pointed to Gehenna, the Vale of Hinnom,

where the offal, refuse, and filth of Jerusalem were burned up, in short, to the city crematory, where the worm was always feeding, and where the fire of consumption and purification never went out. The place of punishment was a kind of Gehenna, a Refuse Heap, and Moral Crematory for lost souls, where the waste of mankind, its personal filth and refuse, were to be cast out and consumed. What He meant to emphasize by this parable was the peril of wasted opportunity. Jesus formulated no clear-cut dogma of endless punishment, indeed never applied the word endless to the future of the wicked (see Dr. Whiton's admirable little book, "Is Everlasting Punishment Endless?"). Rather, He took a dissolving view of the lost. They had sinned against light, the brute in them had throttled the angel, they were become refuse, they should and would be cast out as rubbish.

It was not that sin could not be forgiven, even after death (see Matth. 12: 32), nor that any particular act or acts of transgression deserved so great overthrow; but simply that

nothing could perpetuate itself in which the germ of life had ceased to exist. Life was fatal because determinative of worth—worth gone in its very possibility—the future must necessarily close in upon the waste soul. Men might develop graces entitling them to perpetual growth, but an extinguished character meant a terminating career. They who would live forever must conquer and grow; for others, sooner or later, the refuse heap.

Let us recapitulate. The postulates of the Message, stated in simplest form, were:

God loves all,

God forgives the penitent,

Man must repent, love, and forgive,

A future of glory or of extinction.

That was all! That was enough!

CHAPTER X

THE GATE

BUT how were men to come under the sway of the Gospel? At first sight, the standard would seem to have been put far beyond the possibility of reach for mortal and frail man. To overcome the inertia of carnal security, to subdue the intractable forces of passion and pride, to discern the spiritual and eternal, and, forgiving enemies, to begin to love God with heart and soul, and mind, and strength, the while practising only charity, this would appear to be a task more herculean than to vanquish armies and establish empires. What practicable approach was there to the Kingdom of Heaven?

Jesus recognized this difficulty and admitted that the Gate was indeed strait. Ordinary advantages were all vain to aid one through. Even power and wealth, so almighty in other

connections, far from furnishing help were only a hindrance. It was easier for a camel (cable? as cables were called camels in the Orient) to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom, and the young plutocrat, who came sighing for perfection, if he would attain, must sell all and give his substance to the poor. Still, prosperity, by God's grace, could squeeze through. But to have much, gave one no leverage on forgiveness.

Moreover, selfish seeking availed nothing. To desire very strenuously to pass the barrier gave no one entrance, if the grasping for salvation was selfish. He who would save his life, for his life's sake, would surely lose it. "Other-worldliness" possessed no merit.

Nay, an unselfish *seeking* would not suffice; and the Master felt constrained to say, with reference to the gravity of "repentance," "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will *seek* to enter in and shall not be able." Seeking was not enough; one must strive. And the word strive here is in

the Greek a term describing the violent efforts of gymnasts to win prizes at the public games by feats of skill and strength. When an athlete, after years of self-denying preparation and months of special training, in the hour of his trial put forth all his might to reach the goal first in the foot-race, or to down his adversary in wrestling, this supreme effort of muscle and will was called his "agonia," his agony. No one dreamed of earning the olive crown except at cost of supreme endeavor. To seek merely was to fail, scarcely more effective than only to desire. There must be agony. Human existence was an Olympic theater, and the prize of righteousness only for such as strove with grim energy and earnestness. Seeking did not suffice, there must be strenuous effort, and the seeker must "agonize."

Jesus enforced this great truth by one of His parables: "When once the master of the house hath risen up and shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us,' and

He shall answer and say unto you, 'I know not whence ye are,' then shall ye begin to say, 'We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets,' but He shall say, 'I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.'"

Mark, too, how He applied the fearful lesson to the Pharisees and other devout and respectable religionists before Him, who believed that they had inherited salvation with other properties and privileges, and who never for a moment questioned their own sanctity: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out; and they shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom, and behold, there are last which shall be first and first which shall be last."

Nay, the Kingdom had brought not peace into the world, but a sword, and the entrance

at the Gate might entail even bitter separations. As men went in, they might be called to leave father and mother, wife and child. Hence, so strong and all-compelling must the devotion be, that natural affections, in comparison with consecration to righteousness, must seem as hatred.

We may infer, then, how far were the methods and temper of the Master's call to men from those of our modern evangelists. To advertise on flaming posters, to mass the devout in vast multitudes, to entice sinners in and then to subject them to the strain of organized sympathies, by turn charming them with delicious choral music of intensest emotion and terrifying them with lurid picturings of hell-fire, to hurry the wavering by hundreds to the anxious seat and then to railroad them into the church, blind, trembling, beside themselves, all this was impossible to His pensive, awe-struck, unillusioned spirit. The excited and light-headed, as in the case of the young man who came running unto Him, declaring that he would follow Him whithersoever He

went, He discouraged (Luke 9: 57, 58). Stop, ponder, strip for the agony! so He urged all. No one could respond to His call without conviction and consecration, and these required time, deliberation, and intense earnestness.

Jesus gave this Strait Gate a name. It was Repentance—"metanoia" in the Greek, which, in strict interpretation and in evident meaning, was not grief over sinfulness merely, but change of purpose and attitude, a facing around. In urging this Jesus was saying, practically, "Your ruling purpose is wrong, your minds are deceived, and your hearts are corrupt. As you become my disciples you must change radically. Your sorrow for sin must be a cleansing from it, your confession of God must be your banishment also of His enemy."

There was nothing new in this. It was David's thought in the fifty-first psalm, Isaiah's exhortation to stricken Judea, John the Baptist's call. The Master was astonished that Nicodemus did not perceive this without instruction from Him.

Over this simple immemorial teaching of the Strait Gate, of sorrow for sin and change of attitude, of soul reformation, of soul resurrection, of new birth, or whatever you may call it, modern dogmatic theology has piled a heap of rubbish, concerning metaphysical ability and moral inability, effectual calling and irresistible grace, foreknowledge of free action and foreordination of Divine action, total depravity and human helplessness,—

“You can and you can’t,
You will and you won’t,
You’ll be damned if you do,
You’ll be damned if you don’t,” etc.

Until the puzzled sinner might be excused for seeking the distraction of a sanitarium.

From the Master’s point of view, “all things were possible with God.

CHAPTER XI

THE WAY

THE narrow way was faith. Jesus not only proclaimed this, He constantly put it into parable, by incessant deeds of mercy in healing, which occasions were all eloquent sermons in righteousness. Remember that He never did any work of healing without first insisting upon faith, as the condition not only of the cure but of the power to cure; and this state of mind was not the saving faith of the Narrow Way, but its picture lesson, its foreshadowing of trust in the Healer as the Sent of God and of reformation of character.

Perhaps the most instructive of these occurrences, as it certainly is the most touching, was that of the woman cured of a bloody flux. In this case the sense of personal insignificance was pitiable. The wan creature had

spent all that she possessed for health; and had become penniless, and in the eyes of all an invalid, foredoomed to die. Moreover, her disease was some form of hemorrhage; therefore rendering her "unclean" in the sight of superstition, and abhorrent to popular feeling. Her kindest neighbors had long been wont to look upon her askance, with that same sense of something uncanny in her ailment which ignorant people now experience in gazing upon a lunatic. She was, therefore, made to feel herself an outcast, and as usual was suffering in silence as to her ills. She dared not seek to come to speech with the Healer as He was in the usual throng. But she struggled through the press, and her opportunity at length arrived. An eddy in this sea of humanity brought her not far from His sacred person, and, stretching forth her gaunt hand, one wasted finger succeeded in touching a thread of the fringe on the hem of His mantle as it fluttered out behind. In a moment, Jesus had stopped and turned, and the woman, overcome of shame and fright, fell at His feet

—to receive His blessing: “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace!”

All the healings were parables of faith. The vitality of His touch was the Prophet’s picture-lesson in the life-giving, soul-healing energy of the Divine compassion. So, just so, God’s touch thrilled, healed, and saved.

It is unfortunate that, in English, we have no verb to correspond to our noun faith. In the New Testament Greek, the noun and verb are from the same root and essentially identical. It is a pity we can not translate scripture thus: “Whosoever faitheth Him shall not perish,” etc. The Way is no mere belief, any more than the Gate is mere seeking; and as seeking is not enough for entrance into Life, so belief fails to fit one for the “Only Living and True Way.” “The devils believe and tremble.” Disciples must faith their Master and must faith God. Faith is emotional, a perpetual frame of disposition, a path to walk in, the channel of all spiritual action.

Nowhere, in the annals, is the progress of the soul along the way of faith so vividly illus-

trated as in the story of the woman of the city who ventured into the house of Simon the Pharisee, to the feet of Jesus, as he reclined at the table, on a couch, Roman fashion, among other guests. No virtuous woman could have so defied propriety and saved her good name, but, alas, this weeping girl was concerned with virtue only to mourn its loss, and had no good name to safeguard. Her very degradation gave her impunity. Nameless, portionless, hopeless, she had nothing to lose and nothing to fear, the worst had come upon her, and all possible future ills were not so terrible as this evil past and the hell of torment in her own heart. She knew that none in the company would offer her sign of recognition, in that Presence, though many of those present may have known her but too well—not even a paramour would now suffer her to touch the hem of His garment. She might be driven forth with curses by slaves, and perhaps the very dogs set upon her. But she must not pause; this millstone about her neck was strangling her life and pulling her down to

death and the flaming Gehenna. Death? ah! it were a sweet thought but for conscience and its pointed finger of scorn and judgment! Perhaps she murmured these thoughts of the poet, if in simpler words, uttered by the guilty queen:

“Shall I kill myself?

What help in that, I can not kill my sin,

If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame:

No, nor by living can I live it down.

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,

The months will add themselves and make the years,

The years will roll into the centuries,

And mine will ever be a name of scorn.”

But there is a ray of hope for this Magdalen, for Jesus is yonder, and perhaps she can creep to His feet. He only, of all men, is pitiful; He only can understand; He may be moved to mercy. Has He not said to the very slaves, “Come unto me and I will give you rest”? Somehow, by the working of God’s Spirit, in self-discovery, self-struggle, and deep agony of contrition, she passes the Gate, and by faith enters the Way, as she sinks at His feet in a passion of tears.

CHAPTER XII

LIFE

THE Strait Gate and the Narrow Way led to Life, and this word Life was ever on the Master's lips. "I am come, that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Over the impenitent He sighed, "Ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life." John, the Apostle, who of all the immediate followers seems most fully to have breathed in the Master's spirituality, viewed the Christian career chiefly from this standpoint, and his first epistle is little else than an essay on Eternal Life. The keynote to that profound, wise, tender, and very simple letter to the churches is found in these sentiments: "God hath given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son!" "He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life!" "These things have I written unto you, that believe on the Name

of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life."

On one occasion Jesus defined this kind of life: "This is Life Eternal, that they might know Thee and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

The notion involved in eternal, or "æonian," which is the Greek adjective, then, was not existence, however vastly prolonged in time, so much as a quality and quantity of existence—life which endures of its own vitality, a heavenly mode of *revival* and *survival*—a vital knowledge of the Deity and time-long soul-deep communion with Him. Nearly fifty times is the adjective æonian used to describe Christian character in the New Testament. In one place it is termed "the Life of God," where the phrase means a kind of Divine vitality in man. And then, abundantly, we have derivative figures of speech, which, if not all from the Master's lips, were the natural outgrowth of His frequent utterance along these lines. The Narrow Way is also the Way of Life, the Roll recording the names of

those who enter in is the Book of Life, while for such as hunger and thirst after righteousness there is Bread of Life and Water of Life; and by-and-by a Crown of Life, a Tree of Life, and a River of the Water of Life.

Now what, in the concrete, was this æonian life, and how did it manifest itself in character and conduct? An answer to this question will give us much insight into the aim of Jesus in preaching, healing, and suffering. A close study of the teaching of the Gospel will inform us that æonian life showed itself in three ways.

First, by its prayerfulness. True disciples were not only prayerful, they lived prayer. Prayer was the atmosphere they breathed, and communion with God was a daily habit. Of course, there was no empty formalism about this. Play-actor devotions on the street corners might secure a reward, but not from God. The mere machinery of prayer was utterly vain to stir Heaven; phylacteries well written up were no better than other sorcerers'

charms. Prayer-mills were no more effective for blessing than grist-mills. No one was safer who, to use Shakespeare's quaint words, "being affrighted, swears a prayer or two and sleeps again." On the other hand, devoutness really earnest conferred great personal power, power to work wonders, to accomplish deeds of mercy, to engage cheerfully in painful unselfishness. Peace of mind came only from this close walk with God, and whoso had Life possessed contentment, assurance, and quiet of spirit. Bishop Alford, in his well-known hymn, has tenderly unfolded the Master's teaching at this point:

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence doth avail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosom take!
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power;
We kneel and all around us seems to lower;
We rise and all the distant and the near
Stands out in sunny outline, brave and clear!
Why then should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overcome with care,
That we should ever weak or feeble be,
Anxious or troubled while with us is prayer,
And rest and peace and comfort are with Thee."

The second essential in the practical side of the Master's conception of genuine Christian character was self-denial. Jesus knew of no virtue that was not a form of giving, which did not forgive its enemies, forget its own, and live for others. Æonian life in a man made him surrender self to higher aims not selfish, and he became a whole burnt-offering on an altar. Ordinary living was but a struggle for existence, a survival of the fittest, after dire clashing of interests; but æonian life was death to selfishness, death to the world, the flesh, and the devil in one's heart. Whoso had life forgave debts, prayed for persecutors, loaned without interest, gave without hope of return.

The Christian idea of giving was full of meaning. It involved at once the disinterestedness of the donor and a real benefit conferred upon the recipient. The world, from time immemorial, had been used to gratuities; royal bounty had for ages been as common a notion as royal power, and kings, as they rode out amid the multitudes their own extravagance and luxury

were beggaring, were wont to have with them almoners, who ostentatiously scattered coins. The rich were surrounded by a rabble of poor wretches, who lay at the gates, or followed at their heels, and ate the crumbs of their prodigality. The great often patronized art, and a Horace or a Vergil was dependent upon the alms of some grandee, while every aristocrat in Rome had his clients who looked to him for occasional protection and legal aid. Moreover, all diplomacy involved present-making, and there could be no visit, marriage, or league perfected without gratuity. But nothing of this was the Master's idea of giving. What was that bounty of kings but a prudent, showy return of a few handfuls of the countless treasure wrung by oppression from their wretched subjects, rapacity eager to win also the name of virtue while enjoying the fat harvests of vice? What was the munificence of the rich but the breeding-place of vice, generating paupers, corrupting society? The patron of art only made literature subservient and poets and painters sycophants. Diplo-

macy between nations was not generous, marriages between families were for convenience, leagues between confederates were for selfish protection and safe plunder, and the whole ancient system of gratuity, as is any system but that of æonian life, was coarse, selfish, and demoralizing. The giving encouraged by æonian life was what Paul called Charisma, that is, gracious bestowal—the offering of a heart all self-forgetting and eager to do good for its own sake—not glittering sham like the scattered coins of monarchs; nor like the bounty of nobles, a golden chain for the neck of genius; nor alms to the idle and vicious to make them more so, a benediction on folly, not the price of a profitable contract of marriage converting love into avarice, but charisma, love with proffered hand and whole soul.

The third characteristic of æonian life was Action. To commune with God and to love unselfishly must be balanced with holy action. “Follow me!” was the constant cry of the Master. “Sell all, give, but also come!” “Go thou, and preach the Kingdom of God!”

So He urged the luxurious, the maker of excuses, and every awakened one who had entered the Gate and was walking in the Way.

Spiritual gifts were talents, of which some men received more and other men less; but no man must bury what he was given. If not productive, the talents were misused, and, if uninvested, would shrivel, be squandered, and lost. Believers were to be lights in the world, the salt of the earth, a leaven of godliness, to leaven the crude lamp of humanity, purifying fire. To lay up treasure for self in an existence of spiritual laziness, showed not æonian life, but æonian death.

One might have to forsake father and mother, wife and child, might have to forego home and wealth, yea, be called to suffer martyrdom. No share in æonian life had that cowardice which shrank from danger, that laziness which scorned work, nor that despondency which whines over hardship. In matters of moral and religious decision, the line of least resistance was viewed by the

Master as the pathway of the weakling and the knave. It was the petulance of a child the impatience of the thoughtless, the insurrectionary mood of the ungrateful, to sigh for a bed among lilies or a throne in a palace.

Such was æonian life in a human soul—communion with God, oblivion of self, and sublime action in right-doing, regardless of consequences.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMING JESUS

GENIUS often fails to perceive the sublimity of its own sweep of vision. God uses men to do that, the end whereof is hidden from them.

Thus, Luther never escaped his inherited reverence for the German nobility as rulers by right divine, nor did he ever free himself from profound abasement in presence of ecclesiastical authority when rightly constituted, according to his own ideas. This was innate to his peasant blood. He fought abuses and not institutions, in conscience, not in irreverence. Yet the logical result of his heroism was civil equality and religious liberty. He built better than he knew.

Goethe admitted that he did not possess the key to the full meaning of Wilhelm Meister,

in the seeming belief that he was urged on to his literary work by a power within, not fully comprehended by his conscious mind; and Emerson was unable to tell, at a later day, what many of his earlier mystical sayings originally signified. Both men were sublimely great, seers who could not always interpret their own visions.

So with most prophetic natures, they do not read all the meanings of their own inspiration; their voices utter marvels that seem to their own ears an unknown tongue. What we call creative minds are, after all, themselves in the line of cause and effect, mere agents of a cosmic thinking which transcends human ingenuity.

Jesus was, to some extent, an exception to this rule. To be sure, He Himself confessed that He "knew not the day," and yet He persistently projected His personality into the future. The future was His own. The secret of the world He should reveal. The redemption of society He should accomplish. Constantly He avers that He "shall come." There need be

no doubt as to His mission, for He was the Sent and "Who was to come," and the Kingdom was at hand and among them, and, though He must die, still would He "come," and the Kingdom still should come and come. When He commissioned the Twelve as evangelists, it was with the promise, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man be come." When He instituted the supper at the Paschal feast, He declared, "I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you, in my Father's Kingdom." He was to come with "power and great glory, with His angels, in the glory of the Father, to reward every man, according to his works." He would ever be with His disciples, in holy presence, "all the days, even unto the end of the world." His Coming should be as lightning, and Himself as a householder gone into a far country to return again unexpectedly. In His Coming He should judge all nations. And all this was to happen in this generation, and some then living should see the glori-

ous consummation.* Their watchwords were therefore to be, "He cometh! Watch!"

That these predictions were no interpolations, shoved into the text by subsequent enthusiasm, appears in the fact that the apostles, after the death of their Master, immediately showed themselves completely possessed by this series of thoughts. Their battle-cries were, "He has come!" and "Behold! He cometh!" and each one of them hoped to be of the fortunate who would survive to see these things fulfilled.†

And subsequent ages have wept and laughed—wept in grief of hope deferred, laughed in scorn of prophecy made vain.

* Math. 10:23, 16:28, 24:34, 26:29; Mark 9:1; Luke 21:32; John 16:16, 23 ("a little while"); 1 Cor. 7:29, 31; 1 Thess. 4:15.

† 1 Cor. 7:29; 1 Thess. 4:15, 5:2

CHAPTER XIV

IN THESE TEACHINGS WAS JESUS A DISCIPLE OF GAUTAMA?

THE first Catholic missionaries who went into Tibet were astonished to find the worship of that country an exact parody of their own Romish theology and ritual. There were popes, bishops, abbots, monks, and nuns; temples, monasteries, and convents; bells and rosaries; images and holy water; feast days and processions. The priests were shaven and held confessional. In the native creed was taught an Incarnate God-man, a worshiped Virgin, and a Purgatory; while, as in Italy, the government was despotic, ecclesiastics numerous, idle, and lazy, thought suppressed, and the populace kept poor and ignorant.

This was Buddhism gone to decay, and it was marvelously like the corrupt Christianity the missionaries had brought with them.

While those dismayed priests were crossing

themselves and reporting to Rome that Satan had surely prepared for their confusion a mockery of the true faith, European scholars fell to work upon the more subtle likenesses of the two systems which underlay the superficial similarity, and there resulted a scholastic surprise as keen as the horror of the ecclesiastics. It was found that not only the superficial adjuncts and excrescences of the two beliefs touched at innumerable points, but that in many essentials of dogma and method they ran parallel. Since which time the title of this chapter has been one of the world problems of religious history.

To make this plain, we must remind the reader of a few now well-known facts in the story of the rise of Buddhism. It came as a reformation of Brahmanism, in India, about four hundred years before the time of Christ. The founder was Gautama, a prince of an ancient line of rajahs, who had spent his youth in the luxury common at courts, and who, at thirty, not strange to relate, was worn by dissipation and weary of life. Possessed

of a naturally refined disposition, the pleasures of the palace satiated and disgusted him, and in this mood he began to observe the ills afflicting the common people. He commenced to spend his time brooding over human misery, over disease, and over death. An ineffable pity for his kind sighed deeply within him. He went apart to think out this dark problem, he mused, he fell into deepest reverie, he commenced to see visions, he heard a call from within, he left all, he fled. Having taken a covert farewell of his young wife and babe, whom he loved, with some hope of a return in the indefinite future, like Jesus he went into the wilderness to wrestle undisturbed with himself, with the problems of life, and with the demands of duty. In time, self conquered, the world in him subdued, his soul triumphant, he came forth from solitude, calm and resolute, as did Jesus from the wilds of Judæa, and calm and resolute he preached a new religion and turned a wide world upside down. The dawning consciousness of mission, the call, the struggle, the decision, the

proclamation—it all occurred almost precisely as with the Prophet of Nazareth, four centuries before Mary of Bethany laid her babe in a manger at the inn of Bethlehem. To-day, one-third of the human race are named after him and more or less conscientiously attempt to carry out his system.

Buddhism, in essence, consists of a dogma and of a life.

Its dogma is simply this, that existence is an intolerable burden, cursed by Karma, the germ of evil. Karma is result, moral causality, and produces seeds of its own in successive disaster, and from it there is no escape. Death only prolongs the situation, as, after demise, we shall exist still in some material form, subject to Karma and reaping as we have sown. To be slain, to commit suicide, or to die, therefore, neither cleanses nor delivers. As Omar Khayyam, in the Rubaiyat, puts it,

“We are no other than a row
Of magic shadow shapes that come and go.”

And the coming and the going are woe, and we but shadows in shadow!

A sad parable well illustrates the melancholy pervading this system. A young mother lost by death her only child, and startled, horror-struck, and trembling, she gathered the cold little body to her bosom and, hurrying through the city, entreated every one she met to give her medicine which might restore her darling to life. Among others she encountered Gautama. "Lord and Master, give me some medicine for my child!" she besought in tears and sobs. He bade her bring him a handful of mustard from some house in which no child, parent, wife, nor husband had died. She went in feverish search, but she found that in every house death had preceded her. All, in substance, said to her, "Lady, the living are few, the dead are many." At last the truth dawned upon her mind, and, laying away her baby boy, she returned to the prophet and bowed herself in silent agony before him, and he compassionately said: "Lady, you thought that you alone had lost a son; the law of death is upon all living creatures, there is nothing that abides!" "Our life is as a drop that

trembles on the lotus leaf, fleeting and quickly gone.”

Heaven's best boon is to die, once for all and forever, and never to return to earth to wrestle with Karma. But, alas! this is the attainment only of highest righteousness! This supreme aim of effort, this only real and lasting felicity, is Nirvana, that is, personal extinction, which ceases to Become and then only IS. To sink, at last, into blissful unconsciousness, this alone shall ease the ache of existence.

And none may attain even this, though he reappear and vanish under countless successive forms, unless he walk long time in the Holy Life.

In this Holy Life, there are four paths one must successively trace.

First, the heart must awaken. One's misery must be plainly seen and brooded over; relief must be desired and sought.

Second, the soul must be converted, forsaking all impure desires, every revengeful feeling and each evil work.

Third, the converted soul must renounce ever more and more completely gross desire, ignorance, heresy, unkindness, and even vexation, and must win universal charity. These are some of the mottoes describing this growth in grace: "Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred—hatred ceases by love!" "One may conquer a thousand men in battle, but he who conquers himself is the greatest victor." "Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good will." "As long as sin bears no fruit the fool thinks it honey; but when sin ripens, then, indeed, he goes down in sorrow."

Last of all, in the walk of the Holy Life, the sanctified soul enters the pathway of extinction through a final death of the body, the evil dream of life ceases in blissful awakening, and one's being sinks into the ocean of blissful and unconscious—should we not say subconscious?—rest; and the heaven of the blessed is the kind of slumber Hamlet longed for, a sleep undisturbed by nightmare.

Here, then, we have Awakening, Conversion, Sanctification, and Bliss—a holy life be-

ginning in despair and ending in personal oblivion.

It has been claimed that in all this we may find anticipation of Christian doctrine, and possibly a wellspring of our own Master's inspiration. The resemblances are undeniably startling. It must be confessed by candor that oriental influence over the education and thinking of Jesus can not be positively excluded from theories of his sources of thought and method. It is improbable that Judæa, at the opening of the Christian era, was ignorant of the tenets of Buddhism or entirely beyond the sway of the sublime truths it taught. Both dogmas and theories of life must have come on channels of commerce from the far Orient; nay, it would take some mental hardihood to even question that advocates, expounders, or, possibly, missionaries of Eastern faiths may have lived in Galilee. We have no means of proving that Jesus did not, during the long period between His childhood and His illumination, come under the influence of one or more such teachers.

Still this is not necessary for even a rationalistic explanation of the phenomenon—Jesus of Nazareth. There was nothing in the above outlined Buddhist scheme of instruction and belief not set forth, albeit obscurely, by the Hebrew prophets, nor which a few spiritually minded people were undoubtedly then believing and teaching. No missionary from India was needed in order to instruct the young Nabias to awakening, conversion, and sanctification, knowledge of all which might easily be acquired from Isaiah, from the Psalms, or from John the Baptist. Something of definiteness, something of phraseology, may have been loaned by Gautama to his successor in the path of reform, but little else must of necessity be ascribed, in the teaching of Jesus, to any influence outside His own racial inheritance of sentiment or dogma.

In the underlying philosophy of the Master's system, as also in the hopefulness of His spirit, His teaching was separated from Buddhism by the whole diameter of religious thought.

Beyond the idea of a holy life, with its paths

of Awakening, Conversion, and Sanctification, there is indeed nothing whatever in common between the essentials of the two faiths. In essential Christianity, as presented by Jesus, the pessimism of the system of Buddha is sharply antagonized. Human existence is not an evil to be extinguished, but something to be exalted, no doubt corrupt but to be purified. There is in human nature a germ of evil, but this can by Divine aid be eradicated. Virtue comes to a cross but by the grace of God; this cross may be converted into the throne of sacrifice in this world and into a crown of glory in the world to come. Both systems have a life theory and a life practise, but while the dogma of the one is despair and of the other hope, the practise of the one ends in personal extinction and of the other is personality glorified. The best outcome of Gautama's teachings has been—to say nothing of the excrescences on the surface which superstition and folly have added, and which ought not to be charged against Gautama and his school—the monastery, the begging monk, the yellow gown, the shaven

head, and the wooden bowl—the destruction of human hopefulness, the encouragement of mendicancy, and war upon society. On the other hand, the outcome of the teaching of Jesus—also lopping off excrescences of mediæval folly and scholastic dogmatism—has been, a believer in the world but not of it, enjoying life but not intoxicated by it, living in wedlock yet quite as pure as the oriental celibate, serving the world and urging on progress. The logical result of the Buddhist teaching is the extinction of the race here, and the extinction of personality hereafter; the logical result of primitive Christianity is the supremacy of an altruistic civilization. Buddhism could only have succeeded and does now only survive among a poor and want-harassed populace. It was the religion of extremest poverty, misery, patience—pure, gentle, uncomplaining, but suffering. It flourished in lands where the few satiated themselves into disgust by their profligacy, while the many sweated and groaned and died under the lash of tyranny, and the yet more galling scourge of want;

where man-eating tigers and venomous reptiles lurked in the jungles, where starvation often ran riot in the street, and pestilence lurked in the hut. The Message of Jesus has brought blessing everywhither, providing a tonic for wretchedness and an antidote for sin, disseminating principles sure ultimately to prove fatal to social ills; and it has won the Occidental as readily as the Oriental, thrives robustly under a black skin as in the soul of a Caucasian or Semite, and recks not of latitude, clime, nor race.

Persecution has only purified and strengthened the hold of the religion of Jesus; but, in the eighth and ninth centuries of our era, Buddhism was effectively stamped out in India, its stronghold, by a rival faith.

PART FOURTH
THE MASTER'S METHOD AND
PERSONALITY

CHAPTER XV

THE RHETORIC OF JESUS

RELIGIOUS geniuses, who perceive new truth in the spiritual realm, and would lay foundation for a new faith, contend with several very serious difficulties.

First, words fail them. They find the vernacular uttering only daily needs, customary ideas, and wonted forms of thought. To clothe the new ideas the seer must either fashion new words or use old terms in new bearings. In both cases he is compelled to speak suggestively, handling language with violence and appealing to the imagination.

Moreover, the mental obtuseness of the average man proves a formidable obstacle. The more some common word is made to quiver with fresh life, the less likely is it, with this novel significance, to be understood. Popular intelligence, like popular language,

has to be laboriously leveled up to the seer's plane of thinking. Imagination must be not only appealed to, but educated.

In the wake of stupidity comes prejudice. The fool joins hands with the boor, and, misunderstanding, misrepresents; and, very likely alarmed for time-honored institutions and cherished beliefs, he assails. Hence, all religious founders proceeding on the principle that "Many are called, and few are chosen," or, in other words, that there needs must be many novices to few initiated, or as Socrates put it long before Jesus uttered this proverb, "Many are the wand-bearers and few are the mystics," have gathered groups of chosen disciples and trained them to educate the world.

Perhaps the most formidable of all the obstacles lies in the fact that the matters to be treated of by religious genius lie, in part, beyond the possibilities of any language, however elaborated, and, in part, beyond the full comprehension of any mind, however intelligent. Incapable of scientific measurement

and usual analysis, appealing to religious consciousness rather than to logic, they forever incite interrogation and stir wonder. The words reel and often fall under their load. Religious founders are, perforce, seers of visions that dazzle most of all themselves—prophets in whom the Spirit seethes and effervesces, at times almost unintelligibly, men of awe who occasionally wax faint in the effort to think so hard, and who often speak in riddles that none but they, and often scarcely they, can solve.

Jesus encountered all these difficulties in largest measure, His message transcending the possibilities of exact definition and even of full intellectual comprehension. Whatever might have been His natural temperament and usual utterance, no course could have been open to Him but to speak suggestively, using low words in high meanings, and pictures instead of essays. He, too, must educate spirituality and reach the world through disciples. He, too, possessed of great awe, must appeal to spirituality, forever challenging souls to

muse, harken, and understand. The urgent necessities of the case required that His discourse should be pictorial, mystical, and autocratic.

But, if such a method had not been involved in the character of His mission, there is reason to conclude that Jesus of Nazareth would have chosen it of preference, and it is using moderate language to assert that in His case racial and personal predilection fitted Him particularly to adapt Himself to the limitations of the situation. He was, by nature, education, and surroundings, an Oriental, His thinking fervid, His bent mystical, His imagination ever on fire. Moreover, He was a Hebrew sharing fully in the prophetic temperament of His race, which, though feeble in analytical and logical power, delighted in action and felt intensely, pondered mystery, and gazed curiously into the unseen. Moreover, His personal aptness of thought and speech lent itself readily to suggestive instruction. His resources of mother wit were inexhaustible, His imagination was fertile and

vivid. Of education, in the modern sense, He had enjoyed none. That He ever was taught, in boyhood and youth, to scan, classify, and rate the operations of cognition, or much less, that He ever subjected His mental powers to any process of self-training, there is no evidence and no likelihood. Logic, physics, metaphysics, and all similar realms of thought, familiar at times to Greek scholars, were untouched by Him. In the just previous chapter we have suggested the bare possibility that Jesus may have encountered one or more Indian seers, sojourning in Palestine in His day, and may have received some oral instruction in the wisdom of the East, but of ordinary schooling, even as then known, surely He had been deprived.

But on this very account the thinking of the Master was the more spontaneous and creative. It required no study in *Ars Poetica* to make a Homer, nor is it presumptuous to doubt whether a Homer could have arisen in the age and surroundings of a Horace. Mind of the highest order owes little, in its creative

work, to the technicalities of the schools. Pedagogical training develops and organizes the latent intelligence of a community, but it represses individuality and clips the wings of genius, producing scholars no doubt, but not giving scope of vision to seers. The individuality of Jesus suffered no torsion, and His genius matured normally. The school in which He fitted Himself for His future was the village street, the gate, the well, the synagogue, and the mountain-top. His education was achieved in study of human nature and in rapt communion with God. Long fasts, nights spent under the stars in the open, in prayer, which at times was ecstatic, and a ministry whose brief duration was uninterrupted by labor or even distracting thought upon the exigencies of self-support and the maintenance of a family, afforded full scope for the unfoldings of a nature of extraordinary originality, consecrated to the utterance of an absolute faith.

Hence, when Jesus came to speak in public, most naturally, and without violence to His

own habit of thought, He took to indirection, not only of necessity but with delight. His utterance was a constant appeal to spirituality. It was not precisely a case of exoteric and esoteric instruction; and yet there was a resemblance to those ancient systems of hidden teachings called mysteries—of Eleusis, of Bacchus, or Isis—which prevailed in Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. “To you,” He said significantly to His disciples, “it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

It is of interest here to note that Paul occupied precisely the same point of view, declaring, “Great is the mystery of godliness.” To Paul, the gospel was “the mystery of the faith,” “the mystery of God,” “the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God,” and himself and others were “stewards of the mystery of God.”

If we would appreciate the Master’s discourse, then, we must disengage from the problem all modern and occidental ideas associated with public address. To secure a hall,

to advertise for an audience, to provide gifted secondary speakers, to assemble a chorus of beautiful and gifted young men and women to sing sentimental hymns and tunes, to reason by syllogisms, to infer general laws from a multitude of facts cited, to array about a favorite position a bulwark of texts—all this was utterly foreign to His spirit and method. Doubtless on several occasions, notably in His Sermon on the Mount and in the discourse at Capernaum, there lingers about the narrative some faint suggestion of premeditated public address; but these orations, in substance, quality, and method, remove themselves very far from all the well-known types of public speech—from the golden-mouthed homily of a Chrysostom, from the pulpit thundering of a Luther, or the homely Bible talk of a Moody. If we must deem them set discourses, at least, like all His other sayings, they were absolutely original and inimitable, the outburst of pure genius borrowing nothing.

With these exceptions, if, indeed, they be such, the discourses of Jesus were occasional,

His texts gathered by the way, His subject-matter extempore and pertinent, His rhetorical method ultra tropical, His spirit autocratic, and His sole motive benevolence. He preached anywhere and everywhere, at any time and at all times, as He was feasted, as He strolled, even as He went out to die, on the mountain-top, in the plain, along the village street or the country road, in palace or hovel, ashore or afloat. And often He preached most and best by never saying a word, but by making deed of mercy or significant occasion voice His thought. Modern sermonizers get their themes from a written book; Jesus went to Nature and to life.

His texts were any picturesque or striking occurrence—a gang of slaves going out to work, a woman of the town weeping penitent at His feet, a recent massacre of Galileans by Pilate, a little child, a draught of fishes, a greedy heir, a squall of wind, an ancient well, spring lilies, or a grain-field.

His rhetorical method was thus very pictorial. He could be direct and sententious

enough on occasion, as, letting fall a glance of love and power upon some busy man, He would say to some one He had chosen, "Follow Me!" or to some one He had purposed to heal, "Be thou clean!" But He preferred indirection, even where the situation did not imperatively demand it, and He always seemed reluctant to call things by what, in common parlance, were their proper names. He would not, and from temperament could not, easily "call a spade a spade."

Of the death (or trance) of Lazarus, He said simply, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth!" Mark put it none too strong when he wrote of the Master, "Without a parable, spake He not unto them." Metaphor, simile, contrast, hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, enigma, and fictitious narrative, were the common vehicles of His thought. The listener always had occasion to puzzle out the full bearing of the discourse.

Take the parable of the Unjust Judge. In this odious picture the injustice of the magistrate, the insignificance of the petitioner, the selfishness of her plea, and the success of her

impudent teasing, all combine to furnish material not for a comparison but for a vivid contrast. Far from comparing this case with the answer to devout prayer, rather the Master contrasted the two in every particular. His own summing up of the situation substantially was, "If a person without influence, and coming with a bad plea to a corrupt court, can get an unjust judge, who neither fears God nor regards the rights of man, by her mere impurity to grant an inhuman demand, HOW MUCH MORE will God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, listen to the holiest yearnings of His own chosen, who, so far from insolently teasing Him, await His response in simple-hearted and calm faith." But to interpret this picture lesson evidently needed some alertness of imagination and some touch of spirituality.

Hence the irony of Jesus in condemnation of the stupidity of His hearers, who often lacked this alertness and spirituality. "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, LEST at any time they should see with their

eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and should be converted, and I should heal them!"

Often the situation became dramatic, as when the five thousand were fed, the traders were driven out of the Temple, or the disciples' feet were washed.

In this connection it is significant that He is reported to have said to Saul, in the vision on the way to Damascus, not "Saul, thou art fighting against God," or similar direct rebuke, but "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads."

In previous chapters we have called attention to the fact that among all the sayings of Jesus there are no scientifically expressed dogmas. The most important truths of the faith are entrusted to imagery. The supremacy of righteousness in the heart is "the Heavenly Kingdom," virtue is "Æonian Life," to become a Citizen of the Kingdom, on the human side is "to change purpose," and on the divine side "to be born again;" Heaven is "Abraham's Bosom," "the Garden" (Paradise) or "My Father's House," hell is the

“refuse heap,” or “the crematory” (Gehenna).

The reasoning involved in discourses so pictorial and suggestive must have varied much from the close logic of modern theological treatises. Indeed, the dialectic of Jesus was a successive discharge of thunderbolts.

Such a method was necessarily autocratic, and, notwithstanding His humility, sympathy, and charity, Jesus was never less than imperative. He spoke as a seer who did not argue so much as describe, as though He were a divine ambassador who announced and proclaimed, as though He were typical Man uttering essential humanity. Elijah was the greatest of the old-time prophets, yet Jesus deemed that great man only His own forerunner. Moses spake very wisely, but Jesus held that His own “I say unto you” was more authoritative than the most sacred “It is written.” Indeed, this preaching of the Master was simply heralding, and it is so called in the narrative. All who listened observed at once that He spake not as the scribes, but as one

“having authority.” His “follow me” brooked no argument, and His “Verily, verily, I say unto you!” began and closed the discussion. Whether in the synagogue, amid bigots “filled with madness,” or whether in Temple porch He hurled against the corrupt ring of Pharisees, who controlled things in Jerusalem, righteous denunciation, Jesus was never less than a voice of dignity and authority.

Notice how in this regard He differed from another great peripatetic who strolled among men and ever engaged them in conversation. It was true of the Master, as of Socrates, that an irresistible impulse compelled Him to talk with every human being He met; but, while the Grecian philosopher began by always pretending to be ignorant, dull, and no stickler for virtue, soon by courteous, wily, and strategic argument to prove himself a gentleman, a sage, a moralist, and the greatest of logicians, Jesus, contemptuous of the insincerities of courtly speech and untrained in the technicalities of scholastic reasoning, directly searched the spirit and spoke to the heart.

He would always reply with not what the remark addressed to Him seemed to require, but what the spiritual situation seemed to demand. This involved surprise and often the appearance of abruptness. Thus, when asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" the reply was not affirmation, denial, nor explanation, but only, "Strive thou to enter in at the Strait Gate!" On one occasion there came to Him a man, probably of a light, inflammable nature, who said breathlessly, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest!" and, instead of drawing rapturously to His bosom so promising a convert, the Master, calm and cool, mentioned only the cost of the sacrifice—"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head!" At another time, now evidently dealing with a disciple convicted and well informed but reluctant, Jesus said, "Follow me!" and when the man began to make excuse, pleading that he must first go and bury his dead father, the Master evinced His own sense of the pre-

potence of a clear call of duty over all forms and proprieties, urged frivolously, in the tremendous reply, "Let the dead bury their dead, but GO THOU AND PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD!"

Still another, doubtless a plausible person, pretentious and insincere, time-serving and untrustworthy, already long since committed to the cause, courteously evaded present obligation with the plea, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home, at my house," only to receive the stern rebuke, "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." These replies, so common in the Gospel narratives, are very darts—whither they were aimed they struck, and where they struck they pierced. To borrow an old Latin definition of a good epigram, they were like bees, "small, sweet, and with a sting in the tail." Inbreathed of the soul of wit, they were utterly surprising, not to be escaped, and not to be forgotten.

A sound exegesis of the Master's sayings

ought thus to involve far more than grammatical training and intellectual vigor. There is needed in the student of Jesus now as in His disciples of old, alertness, interrogation, reverence, faith, and, above all, spirituality of understanding. To grasp the logia of Jesus in a dogmatic fist is to utterly crush them; one's touch must be as light as the brushing of an angel's wing. Well for the exegete if he love wit, well if his imagination be responsive, well if his thinking be shot through, here and there, with a golden thread of poetry.

We may learn a profitable lesson from the obtuseness of the disciples, who, though Orientals themselves and under their Lord's constant training, were always misunderstanding Him, murmuring aside in little groups of puzzled unbelief and discontent. Again and again the Master found Himself sighing, "How is it that ye have no faith?" "Oh, faithless and perverse generation!" "How is it, that ye do not understand?" Yet those dull followers were very mystics alongside of many a commentator or theologian who has planted

elephantine foot upon the delicate play of the Prophet's irony and the ethereal subtleties of His imagination and spirituality. Well said Voltaire of Dante, "He, too, has commentators, which is another reason why he is not understood!"

CHAPTER XVI

SOME PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS

THE Master discerned the unseen. He saw beyond. It was not second sight but first sight—seeing through and through.

The spiritual world, like the scientific, is boundless. We know that scientists are forever pushing out the barriers only to find the same infinity of the unknown beyond. In the glory of the heavens the naked eye can discern a vast number of planets and stars, which telescopes multiply a thousandfold and the imagination a millionfold; and in the realm of the minute, our microscopes show a like expanding multiplicity of the small, so that into a thimble you may crowd thousands of billions of microbes, each a perfect cell carrying the whole mystery of life, and each possi-

bly a universe in complexity. To the infinite and to the infinitesimal there is no limit.

And, in morals and religion, no more are there barriers beyond which thought may not penetrate. There is always a beyond and a beyond. It is with religion as it is with everything else: to see one must look, and when one looks more looms up in the background for future acquirement. The beautiful sunset is for all the town, but not one eye in a hundred sends his loving glance to behold and enjoy its pageant of ruby and emerald, amethyst and gold; and even the nature-lover, who gazes, perceives more than color and form, more than sunshine and cloud—perceives sunset of splendor for life's evening, a Golden Age for the world's future, Nature's beckoning to dream-land and reverie. And, just so, the starlit heavens glow for a hemisphere, but few gaze up to pierce their mystery and muse upon the glories of an endless universe; and such as can do this, go farther, and discern those heavens which be above the skies. Every pool teems with life, but how many have actually looked

through microscopes upon that fairy world of existence and minute beauty; and the few that are inquiring and patient enough for this are those who look deep into the laws underlying life and the evolution of things hidden from others. They see who look, and whoso behold with eyes of flesh find eyes of imagination also working in them, and visions of spirituality forming in the field of sight. To see is the beginning of all spirituality, it is God's school of growth in divine wisdom. Said Ruskin, "Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one."

More, probably, than any one who ever lived Jesus saw into and through and behind things, in the sphere of ethics and religion. You may say of Him what Goethe declared of Plato: "He sought Heaven like a pointed flame!"

It was this gift kept Him undeceived and disillusioned as to the shallow formalism of the Pharisees, the elegant unbelief of the

Sadducees, the narrow pietism of the Essenes, and the gilded coarseness of the Herodians. The great rabbis to Him were only subtle casuists, the Sabbath was an institution ordained for the benefit of man, ceremonies were but conveniences for the formation of useful habits of devotion, long prayers a senseless chatter, religious parade an abomination. Even the Temple was but perishable stonework of human device, and not in the least essentially sacred. Remember how He scorned the superstition, which in inherited affliction discerned an ancestral curse of God; and how He rejected the false patriotism which viewed foreigners as the enemies of God, and how He claimed heretical Samaritans as His brethren. Did He not remind His neighbors at Nazareth that Elijah, during a famine, had been sent not to a Hebrew but to a Sidonian woman, and that Elisha had cleansed no leper but Naaman the Syrian? He commended the faith of a Roman centurion, and in the same breath upbraided the Jews for their unbelief. When James and

John, those sons of thunder, would, in their fiery zeal, command flame to come from Heaven and consume an inhospitable Samaritan village, "even as Elias did," He replied, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." The hero of one of His parables was a Samaritan, aye, and—Shade of Hillel—a good Samaritan! while the villains of the story were a priest and a levite!

For Him, many rich were poor and some poor rich; there were last who should be first and first who, by and by, should find themselves last; there were many called and few chosen, many novices and few mystics; the wise might be cast out and babes had become the proper types for wisdom; the Pharisee in the Temple remained unheard, while the publican who dared not lift up his eyes went away justified; the poor widow dropping but two mites into the treasury, gave more than wealthy nobles who deposited gold; the Children of the Kingdom should go into outer darkness and disciples should come from the east

and west, north and south, to take their place with the old patriarchs.

For Jesus, the slave might seem as worthy of respect as the emperor, the layman as the priest; and another world of judgment might place Dives in torment and Lazarus, the beggar, on Abraham's bosom. He denounced the world for its follies, its shams, its vices, and its crimes, and, although He showed Himself possessed of the very largest faith in the possibilities of human reform, He never closed His eyes to existing evils. A very child of the Devil, at the eleventh hour, might repent and be received. His own humble, ignorant, and often dull peasant apostles seemed to Him princes in prospect. He saw their thrones, their crowns, their dominions, in the future. Nay, any poor drudge, wearing the yoke, labor as he must, be weary as he might, and afflicted beyond measure, in Him and in God should find rest.

When John and others came to Him with the complaint, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name and he followeth not

us, and we forbade him because he followeth not us," the reply was grave: "Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my Name that can speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give a cup of water to drink in my Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward." And when the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, attempted to argue theology, saying, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where man ought to worship," how did He answer with words of insight, "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

This everywhere-ness of standpoint, with its turning of things topsy-turvy, this range and penetration of vision, naturally showed itself in some distance between the Master and His disciples—they not only did not always understand His utterances, as we remarked in the last chapter, they sometimes failed utterly to

fathom Himself. And at times, when they had persuaded themselves that the enigma had cleared up, they were far from secure in their apprehension. "Lo! now speakest Thou plainly," they assured Him on that last night in which He was betrayed; "now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God," only to provoke His searching glance and His sighing response: "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me!"

Closely connected with this insight, and in part explaining it, was the Master's intensity of conviction. Truth held Him in a giant's grasp and swayed Him with regal omnipotence. In His hand seems to have been an Ithuriel's spear, at touch of which error, however disguised in comely shape and goodly raiment, started up in its own detestable and

grisly appearance. Truth was truth, lies were lies, falsehood was abominable, and sincerity divine. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," He warned His disciples; and the hypocrisy in view was not conscious and deliberate pretense, perpetrated with malice aforethought, but as the Greek word means, "play acting," or that unconscious posturing and parade which concealed insincerity and which at that time passed current for devotion; it was not what Rochefoucauld had in mind when he defined hypocrisy as the "homage vice pays to virtue," nor what the good Abbé Poullé sighed for, during the French Revolution, when he declared with a sigh, "Alas! there are no hypocrites now!" (religion having ceased to be an available cloak). The hypocrisy alleged by Jesus was simply the playing in life of a part not one's own. Himself was intensely sincere, and for Him to recognize a truth was to adopt and proclaim it at any cost whatever.

Doubtless the love of truth is innate in mankind, one of the sanctities of the inner

shrine of the best humanity. Even those most given to negation are often jealous for facts proven. One of the fiercest of modern skeptics taunts believers with the inability to conceive "why any man should attack a lie simply because it is a lie"; while Huxley, in the same breath which asserts that man is a "conscious automaton," pleads for a love of truth, insisting on the taking of his bitter pill, for the truth's sake. Though the heavens fall through its acceptance, we must receive and revere what is true.

To Jesus, this inborn sincerity was a noticeable characteristic.

Another characteristic was His intensity of self-poise. He was not under the stress of multitude. In this He very sharply contrasted most of His kind. The stress of multitude conditions nearly all thought and action.

The orator shows this very plainly when he faces an audience. He may have met these same people, this and that one and the other, on the street with indifferent cordiality or

cold neglect, but let him face them in a hall and his carelessness is gone; the assemblage, as a whole, is larger, wiser, more to be feared, more to be courted, than each or any of them considered alone, or all of them on the average. This collective person, these many in the dignity of multitude, exact and receive from him an homage which, as persons individual, they do not ask nor deserve.

Soldiers keenly feel this power of the many in unit; in consequence, Providence has ever been on the side of heavy battalions. Many of the greatest victories of history have simply been the result of the moral impression of multitude: a column of narrow front, but massive in depth, would move in phalanx upon the enemy, and though it was evident that only the foremost could engage in battle, the foe with wider, but on the whole lighter, column would break and fly, terrified, and before a blow was struck. The Romans were invincible and conquered the world because they possessed the rare moral quality which enabled them to resist in imagination the stress

of multitude and to fight undismayed in thin, open lines. To-day, it is only the army of a civilized nation that can battle in thin, open lines.

The majority of men are simply *genus homo*, at best only average humanity, unable to form judgments or to act, except in crowds. As Madame Roland, herself one of the victims of the frenzy of a populace, said, amid the horrors of the French Revolution, "The feeble howl with the wolves, bray with the asses, and bleat with the sheep!" Mankind is most courageous, most cruel, and most cowardly in masses.

Jesus possessed in highest degree the qualities which enable some to free themselves from this bondage of servile submission to numbers. He belonged to the minority of the minority—aye, and He was elect even among the chosen. Nothing of His thinking was done in the public mill. His X-ray was not deflected by magnetism, as a physicist might say. He confessed to none but the Father. Indeed, He was most Himself when

away from men, alone with God—in the fields strolling, on the mountain tops while others slept.

We need not be surprised, then, when we find the Master doing unpopular things. He antagonized the Pharisees, who in any vigorous assertion of Messianic claims by any one would seem to have been the most easily rallied advisers and adherents, as they were the Messianic party. He associated with publicans, though these officials were detested by all men. He healed the sick on the Sabbath day, in seemingly needless offending of very common prejudice. He ate with unwashed hands, contravening good manners. He repressed popular demonstrations and drew aloof from vulgar crowds, that with gaping mouths, hungry stomachs, and itching palms thronged and would lionize Him. He disliked publicity, tumultuous support, and vulgar applause; and even almost seemed to resent endorsement from many, reputed wise and undeniably powerful. “See that thou tell no man!” was often His anxious injunction for

the healed. He not seldom avoided His own followers, slipped away, and withdrew into privacy. His delight in the desert place and the mountain heights probably was in some measure owing to the fact that these places were inaccessible. As He appealed only to thoughtfulness and spirituality, unlike the usual religious reformer or the professional revivalist, He exceedingly dreaded fanaticism, commotion, and noisy approval.

In short, Jesus was self-poised, by nature an aloof and unpopular man, the creator of great thought but not the successful promoter of a great movement. He Himself did little toward the founding of the Christian Church as a historical movement, except to furnish the underlying principles; and when Christendom arose in its might it was largely through the magnetism and energy of more practical men, and proved itself a structure only in part evolved out of His visions, ethics, and charity.

Closely allied to these characteristics was another very marked in Jesus and impossible

to overlook in any even casual study of His career. This was the perpetual recurrence of that Moral Shock which vice and crime always cause in virtue. All innocent and upright persons feel this in some measure, and often when young quite intensely. Age brings some deadening of this sensibility with every one; the best come to listen to the oaths of the profane with increasing indifference, read the daily details of vice and crime without shudder, and discuss social problems with calm allowance for so much of social obliquity.

Jesus was very peculiar in that the horror of wounded virtue never left His eyes; His imagination never became reconciled; His heart never ceased to be indignant. The petty hatreds of business competition, the foolish feuds of families, the currish ill-will that can not abide the prosperity of rivals, the snarlings of jealousy, the gleeful whisperings of elvish gossip, the flatteries that cover subservient contempt, the slanders that utter deliberate spite, the guile that seeks the ends of fraud, the violence that strikes for anger,

and the treachery which accomplishes the vile designs of lust—these, and all similar outbursts of the savage in us, were ever in full view of the Master, His dread, His grief, His deadly foes. He pronounced the generation in which He lived, “evil and adulterous,” and in its presence He stood, like Moses at the orgy of the Israelites, like Ezekiel in the Temple, like Daniel at the feast of Belshazzar, a presence of rebuke. So He said of the world, “Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil!”

We have observed that the shallow ethics of His day, confusing disaster with guilt and interpreting heredity as sin, did not cloud His eagle vision. He even made such popular superstitions texts for sermons of denunciation of themselves. When certain of His disciples told Him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, He asked them, “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered these things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise per-

ish!" Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!"

A vivid scene illustrates this ethical severity of the Master. It was after He had healed an impotent man on the Sabbath day, at the Pool of Bethesda, and was subsequent to a plucking of grain by the disciples to satisfy hunger, also on the holy day. The scribes and Pharisees, who were at that time following the Prophet's trail like bloodhounds, listening to His words of grace with malice and tempting Him with dangerous queries, had forced upon Him, in a synagogue, the vital issue of Sabbath desecration. Oh! that only He would heal this cripple, and so, before all the multitude, proclaim Himself a violator of law! The savage in them had drawn the bow and balanced the spear. Those cold faces, the eager cripple, and Jesus so sad, the shock of virtue in His heart, such strange fire in His usually mild eyes, and such sense of conscious

power in the poise of His body! With what quiet authority did He bid the patient "Stand forth!" and as the man advanced, embarrassed, study the attitude of the Master as He fixed His gaze, not upon the man, but upon the crowd. "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" As no answer came, He "was filled with wrath." The word wrath is very strong in the Greek. A mighty indignation had possessed the Prophet, and He was like Elijah before Ahab. "Stretch forth thy hand!" Let them go out now, those small, venomous souls, and hiss their hatred to the Herodians. But notice the contrast between His "wrath" and their "madness." He was enlarged by His indignation and stood forth from the scene sublime like an archangel, they shrivelled into detestable envy, jealousy, and spite—human toads, wolves, hyenas. His wrath was the shock of virtue, the obverse side of His love, and His disciples, after His death, could, and without the slightest feeling of contradiction in terms, proclaim Him the coming Judge

and warn all of the "wrath of the Lamb." They remembered how perpetual in Him was the ethical shock.

Contrasting this perpetual shock of virtue in the Master was a quite characteristic tenderness, which should never be ignored or belittled in any estimate of Him. We might almost say there was a womanly streak in His nature. There was in Him boundless capacity for affectionateness and sympathy; He loved little children, took them in His arms, blessed them, and used them as types of innocence and faith, and He gathered about Him pure-minded women in deathless friendships. The sufferings of men melted His heart. At the tomb of Lazarus He wept, though Lazarus was about to come forth, seemingly in view not merely of this sorrow but also of the dark sepulcher and of the many Marthas and Marys who should grieve for their lost un-comforted.

We have already noted how, as He came over the Mount of Olives in His last approach

to Jerusalem, when the people were waving palm-branches in token of His future victory and flinging down their gala garments to be trodden upon by Him, at that moment of His supremest earthly triumph, at sight of the Holy City and in vision of its coming overthrow and desolation, He burst into tears. A few days later, as He went out to Calvary, preceding His own cross and with the fore-shadow of death resting upon Him, He yet did turn with pity toward the weeping women who followed, thinking actually less of His own dark fate than of the woes which must come over them. And, dying in agony, this was His prayer over His enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Even love of nature and delight in the beautiful was not denied Him. He admired flowers and mused over seeds, sought the brotherhood of the winds, played with the waves, and communed with the stars. The eloquent Hindoo sage, Mozoomdar, in his

“Oriental Christ,” does not draw heavily upon his imagination when He declares of the Master, “The dew and the sunshine, the seed time and the harvest, the fields, pastures, flocks, and flowers were to Him a perpetual festival. His eyes dwelt and wandered in the midst of them, His ears drank their music, His heart feasted upon their poetry, His imagination extracted sweet everlasting metaphors from them. His spirit had the poetic pastoral genius of the primitive Hebrew. He spent His nights with the stars upon the mountain tops, He preached on the shingly margin of the Galilean lake, He spake from the ripples of its breezy surface. Nature was His bridal chamber, and Christ was the bridegroom.”

It grieves us to fail of evidence that Jesus was a musician of some sort, or at least that He was a lover of tone and melody. He may, as a boy, have listened with pleasure to the murmuring of the leaves as they fluttered in the winds, or to the love-calls and trills of song-birds, or to the occasional lays of stroll-

ing musicians, but there is no record of it. In His homilies He speaks tenderly of sparrows, but never draws any lesson from the warblings of nightingales. This could not have been because appreciation of music in His day generally failed His race. There were many musical instruments, and their chords and melodies, though simple, were sweet. From time immemorial strings had been stretched so as to vibrate tones in drafts of winds, and sometimes different tones in harmony. The warrior's bow, ages ago, had been strung with catgut, or similar material, and with more strings than one, and bent into a harp; the hollow reed had been cut into ancestors to flutes and oboes. There were now such harps as David played, and better, psalteries, sackbuts, and other instruments. And musicians of some rude skill must have abounded. Did Jesus love tones? was He set dreaming over chords? did He hum to Himself melodies? did He listen with breath abated and with eyes of rapture to the rude minstrelsy of the times? If so, it was a fea-

ture of His inner life and not alluded to in His public teachings. Perhaps this silence is not significant, and owing to the fact that music in His day connected itself with hideous rites of burial and mad scenes of revelry.

Nor can we show any appreciation, or even consciousness, of the other fine arts—of painting, sculpture, and architecture—in the Prophet of Nazareth.

We are certain of ourselves only when we assert that He loved the beautiful in nature. The beautiful in art was either an untrodden world or else, for reasons, ignored in public address.

Coming to His relation to the future, we observe in Jesus what has appeared in the visions of all who foresee—He could not estimate distance.

To those who possess the wonderful gift of precognition—and it has been proven beyond reasonable denial that there are some thus strangely endowed—time is not an essential element in the prophetic landscape. Their visions are not in diorama but in panorama,

in scenes which succeed each other but not in perfect order or nice adjustment of sequence.

Jesus commissioned the Twelve with the significant promise, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man be come!" And when this failed, He assured His own that the generation in which they lived was not to pass ere all should be fulfilled. And then it was the æon, which should close with the old order.

There is something generous and beautiful about this far-sightedness of enthusiasm, belittling hindrances, this eager outgrasping for tangible results; and it is most touching to hear each great-hearted reformer cry out, in ardor of hope, concerning His message:

"If this fail, the pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble!"

Perhaps the prayer in Gethsemane and the cry of agony on the cross indicate in the Master something of that disappointment which always befalls prophet and reformer as there comes gradually perception of God's delays

and virtue's failures. Be that as it may, His visions were not false, because retreating ever into the remote future; and His ideas were not less noble for being from any and every human point of view impracticable. Things absurd to men may, after all, be practicable to God, but only at His time and in His way. The mills of the gods grind more slowly than reformers will bring themselves to perceive, but, after all, they grind as fine as the prophets wish.

The above characteristics of Jesus will prepare us to moot the most difficult problem of His biography. We refer, of course, to His exaggerated claims. Undoubtedly He insisted upon a preeminence nothing short of divine. Said He, "I and the Father are one!" "He in me and I in Him!" He even went so far as to declare that none might approach God except through Him, as He was the Way, and whoso walked through Him would attain God, and in Him perceive the Father. He was "the True Vine," and the

righteous were His branches. He was the Living Bread, and whoso would live must eat His flesh and drink His blood. He was the Door, and to climb in any other way was burglary of God's house. He was the Living Resurrection and the Good Shepherd. He was the Sent; He came down from heaven—"before Abraham was I am!" Imagine Elijah or Isaiah, Luther or Whitfield, saying to audiences: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls!"

That this was no actual assumption of Godhood we have shown in plain denials from the Master's lips in our chapter on His claims; but this concession will not wholly satisfy just criticism, and one of two grave conclusions must be valid. Either Jesus was presumptuous to the very verge of insanity, or else His imaginative nature was so intensely spiritual and so wholly consecrated that His will had indeed become the divine will and Himself

thus veritably the gate and the way to God. The whole stress of facts forces us to the latter conclusion, and this is our firm conviction. The personality of the Master, intense and peculiar as it was, had been devoted so entirely to holy aim and control that "Come unto me" meant nothing but "Come unto God." The problem is solved by the two factors, both present in highest degree, of imagination and of spirituality. It must never be forgotten that Jesus was an Oriental, that the things which make up the average Occidental's life were nothingness and vanity to Him, that only the unseen, the spiritual, the eternal seemed real to Him, and that the reality of this upper-world of the true, the beautiful, and the good was vivid to white incandescence.

We may find frequent illustration of this on a very humble plane, perhaps, in the fidelity of the general manager of some great corporation, who has for many years identified himself with its interests, until at last he has come to respond to business queries in the first person. He is asked, "Will your com-

pany do this or that?" and his reply is, "No, really I can not," or, "Yes, indeed, I will," the answer being not the language of assumption at all, but only of absolute devotion.

At the famous discourse in Capernaum, when the audience took offense at this mode of thought in Jesus and petulantly insisted upon interpreting his extravagances of rhetoric literally, Jesus was surprised that they should have so misunderstood Him. He argued in His own mind that they ought to have perceived that His words were "spirit" and "life." "Why do ye not understand my speech?" He queried, in perplexity, of the same sort of critics in Jerusalem. They were too stupid to see that His language was phosphorescent with spiritual intent.

There is one other instance in history of absolute identification of personality with the Divine. This was the case of Gautama Buddha. Whole-souled consecration and intense humanity in time identified him, in his own self-attitude, with that periodic Buddha whose reincarnation from time to time it was

supposed, and he believed, brought guidance to erring man. He, too, was a man, yet he became by holiness of life and loftiness of aim a Voice of the Eternal, the embodiment of virtue, the personified Way of Life. That the All should speak on Gautama's lips never seemed incongruous to his disciples.

Both Gautama and Jesus, without intent to glorify self, without shadow of arrogance, nay, in utmost humility, so sank personality in duty and service as to seem to themselves saviors of men and the Mouthpiece of God.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS SHOWN IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD INSTITUTIONS

JESUS found three great institutions firmly established—the State, the Church, and the Family—Rome, the Temple, the House—Cæsar, the Hierarchy, One's Brethren. He therefore exacted of His disciples a threefold service, of loyalty, of piety, and of morality.

Toward the state, the Prophet did not teach treason; His disciples must "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and it became even Himself to "fulfil all righteousness."

Undoubtedly Jesus knew perfectly well that the doctrine of His message would dethrone the emperor and unseat all earthly potentates. His Kingdom was not only unlike the kingdoms of this world and came not "with observation," it was an empire within the empire

and inside the very soul which, when worked outward into custom and institution, would revolutionize. He was not a rebel, and yet He taught insurrectionary doctrine.

Most significantly He said to His disciples, "The Kingdom of God is within you!" The true believer was thus not only a subject of Cæsar, he was citizen of an invincible, spiritual, eternal commonwealth, his allegiance supremely to God and the truth. Therefore, though bidding His followers heed the laws and reverence rulers, Jesus called them to a spirit of self-respect inconsistent with subserviency, and therein laid the foundations for possible martyrdom, for heroism in defense of all truth, and ultimately for civil as well as religious liberty.

That He cherished hope of some new social order appears probable in view of His intense emphasis upon the fact that the Kingdom was "at hand," and of His own expectation of "coming with power." The disciples should encounter the opposition of the world but were not to be dismayed, as He "had overcome the

world." There should be goats as well as sheep among the nations, but Judgment should be had; the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory, and the norm of that perfected society should be disposition to aid the poor (Matt. 25: 31-45). This idea of social organization was no dream of conquest and cruel domination, it involved no hierarchy and admitted of no possibility of tyranny. It trusted and expected much of humanity. In this Kingdom Come, men should forgive their enemies, lend to borrowers without exaction of interest or close scrutiny of collateral, and give away without hope of return; hence, there should be no master and no slave, no rich, no poor, no oppression, no greed, no luxury.

This expectation of the Master was the germ of Millennial hopes, which have both blessed and cursed Christendom, which have both forwarded and retarded civilization.

The attitude of the Master toward the State, then, was not quite that of unquestioning loyalty and patriotism, but of temporary

tolerance with the hope of betterment through moral forces working by love.

Toward the Church, the Temple, the Hierarchy, Jesus maintained a sort of armed truce. He does not seem to have frequented the synagogues, and from that at Nazareth He was ejected with violence for what the congregation deemed infidel utterances. Driving the traders from the Temple and hurling sarcastic defiance against its sacerdotal authorities, He declared that sacred edifice "My "Father's House." In short, as we now should word the facts, He was neither a church-going man nor orthodox. His dissent amounted to hostility, so far as the ecclesiastical leaders of the people were concerned—"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." In other words he deemed the clergy of the day not only defective in character and in wisdom but not even eligible to the Kingdom. The Jewish Church was

not within the real pale. The new order set up a higher ethical standard than the old, and even entrance to the new was impossible to the old ideal.

He neglected ritual and ridiculed scrupulous ceremonial observance, and sharply criticized the rabbinic law when it ran counter to what He considered sound morals, as, for instance, in the matter of the Corban (Matt. 15: 5). If, at one time, He declared that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," He referred not to legalities but the unfolding ethics of the ancient history of His people.

His whole career was a protest against the domination of synagogues, the tyranny of priestcraft, the emptiness of formalism and the vanity of professions. His ecclesiasticism was summed up in the words, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth!"

His disciples did not at first appreciate this scope of ethical and religious vision, this

everywhereness of point of view, this catholicity of charity, but always the Master was preparing them for the final revelation. His purpose and method in this appear well in the story of the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, and, as this narrative is very significant in its bearings upon the whole matter, we will give it at some length.

Jesus had chanced upon the coast of Phœnicia, and a woman of Canaan, a heathen, followed Him in the way piteously crying out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!" The Master, however, for His own reasons, paid no attention to her, until the disciples, their prejudices overcome by sympathy, besought Him with entreaty to send her away with the blessing she craved. Now mark the reply, exactly parodying their own oft-spoken bigotry: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel!" The sequel shows this utterance to have been ironical. He was using not His own, but their weapons with which to slay them. He was

shaming them with their own prejudices. It was a gentle irony which thus limited His mission and bounded His sympathies. Jesus was much given to this form of pictorial expression. Thus it was irony when He said to the Pharisees, "They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It was irony when He said, in gentle rebuke to His drowsy disciples that last night in Gethsemane, "Sleep on now and take your rest. Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners!" The Syrophenician woman seems to have discerned the Master's hidden meaning, and it may be that her woman's wit perceived the whole purpose of His delay and reluctance. She made profound obeisance before the Prophet and cried out, "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!" Then Jesus, evidently having the puzzled disciples in mind, and thinking to test yet further the faith of the poor mother, turned to her, and, using just such language as any common Jew would have uttered

under like circumstances, said to her: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs!" This seemed a hard and cruel reproach, but was only like what the disciples were constantly themselves saying to and of heathens. Jesus was only repeating bluntly before her face what every one of them would say, without thought of injustice, behind the woman's back. No doubt He intended that they should talk on His lips, and should, in the very incongruity of the sound of it, perceive the wrongfulness of their attitude toward the Gentile world. Was the mother now in despair? did she resent the seeming insult? did she turn sorrowfully away? Not at all. She seems to have understood the Prophet perfectly, and would take nothing as insult and suffer no discouragement. "Truth, Lord," replied the quick-witted and eager suppliant, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the Master's table!" We can see the wise and gentle smile that breaks like dawn over the Prophet's face and the kind glance now resting on the pleader

who was kneeling before Him, as, feeling that the lesson was learned in a twofold instruction, He let irony give place to admiration and approval: "Oh, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

As Jesus considered the old Jewish ritual and ceremonial fulfilled in His new Commonwealth of faith and love, it was inevitable that He should have organized some outward embodiment of His Kingdom. He spoke of the Church—"My Church" (Matt. 16:18); He gave rules for its discipline (Matt. 18:15); appointed twelve apostles as officers, instituted sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper), and provided for its universal spread. Almost His last injunction was His command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

"Thou art Peter" (meaning rock) said He to the boldest of His apostles, "and upon this rock I will build my church!" But Peter was not the only foundation rock, he was only a type of brave, earnest believers, for the Master immediately assured the apostles in

general, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." They all had the power of the keys.

It is significant, as throwing back light upon the teachings of Jesus, that, in the New Testament, the pillars and foundation stones of Christian institutions are always declared to be men, not creeds, never forms, nor even historical memories however sacred and impressive, but men who, like Peter, are rocks in firmness and integrity. In the First Epistle to Timothy, Paul declared the Church to be the "Pillar and Ground of the Truth," and by the Church he evidently meant not any corporation, nor collective entity, nor controlling hierarchy, but only the constituent members. Peter himself proclaimed Christ as the Corner-stone, and all disciples as "living stones." In the Book of Revelation, Jesus is represented as assuring us, by the Spirit, that "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God."

The Church, as Jesus conceived it, was

evidently purposed to rest on men, as pillars and foundation stones, and to stand or fall according to their fitness to bear the burden.

Of provisions for denominations, there is no slightest trace in records of the sayings of the Master. Our Protestantism of to-day, no less than its Romanism, would have excited amazement and indignation in the Master's mind, could He have foreseen it. Protestantism's excessive emphasis upon individual preference, its numerous subdivisions on lines of prejudice, pride, ignorance, and fanaticism, its incessant generation of new sects, its seclusive aristocratic ideas of parish life, its system of private properties and exclusive claims in the House of God, its absurd and baneful practise of what can be no better named and characterized than by the phrase "candidate chewing," its dire struggles not to help mankind but to pay the bills of its own pretentious and local extravagances, its rivalries, its jealousies, its fairs, its grab-bags, and its theatricals—all these evils were apparently not foreseen, and surely not provided for, in the

Master's ideal of His Church. Sectarian bodies may, indeed, as George Eliot averred, get "some warmth of brotherhood by walling in the sacred fire," but the sacred fire was surely not lighted at the beginning with such base intent.

Toward the family Jesus assumed an attitude of positive admonition. The family, cursed with the bane of polygamy, easy divorce, and marital infidelity, existed in the days of the Master in only rudimentary condition. Human beings mated and procreated, and did not altogether escape the sweet thrall-doms of domestic relations; but social existence was on a low level, the wife had few rights, the husband granted her scant respect and less love, and the family idea was most regnant in the position and authority of the mother-in-law.

The admonitions of Jesus were of startling originality and of no little severity. He insisted upon one husband and one wife, and no divorce except for infidelity—upon love

and purity in marriage, upon faithfulness unto death, upon mutual devotion to children, who were to be viewed as seals of tenderness and pledges of sobriety. Divorce with remarriage was adultery, and even to look upon a woman with lustful thought was nothing short of adultery. The greatness of a man was also the greatness of his mate. So a husband was called to love his wife, and for her he must forsake all others, and love was love forever more.

Thus the family was a Divine institution, and marriage little short of a sacrament.

PART FIFTH
REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COST OF SALVATION

THE death of Jesus on a malefactor's cross was the most pitiful event in human history. Misunderstood, slandered, betrayed—falsely accused and unjustly condemned—He died as a felon, between murderers. Six days before the rabble had hailed Him King, and had cast their gala raiment in His way and waved palm-branches in token of His expected victory over all foes; then, after having shouted before Pilate's judgment bar, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" they wagged their empty heads with the chief priests on Calvary and said, derisively, with the Pharisees, "Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe!" And the while His chosen disciples, who had shared every hardship with Him and had been so eager to be baptized with His

fiery baptism,—quarreling with one another for place at His right hand and on His left,—were scattered every one to his own. It had all seemingly ended in the cruel mockery of the fling of scorn: “He saved others, Himself He can not save!” Yet most sublime was His triumph over fear and pain when His great heart sighed out life with an “It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

He who reads aright the meaning of the crucifixion has solved the problem of life.

At first glance, the death of Jesus only illustrated the fact that intense personality consecrated to great ends costs high. It has cost heroes, in all ages, their popularity and peace of mind; it has cost those heroes who were also martyrs—and there have been many, martyrs of faith and martyrs of science—their lives. Consecration of personality to great ends means thinking ahead of your neighbors, and they may not catch up in time. This involves charge of oddity, conceit, and obtrusiveness. On the coast of Maine, off

Mt. Desert Island, twenty-five miles from land, there is a lighthouse on a rock. One man, his wife and his children, keep ward and watch in perfect isolation. Many a brave and wise man or woman lives thus in advance of even the outlying shores of public opinion, trimming the lamp that shines over the stormy deep, the salvation of the wave-tossed mariner—but in solitude, all alone. Jesus, on the last night in which He was betrayed, said to His disciples as, misunderstood by them, a lone stranger in a busy world, He felt the awful foreshadowing of death draw over Him, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone!” So it then was, so it has been everywhere, and so it shall be forevermore!

Many a true soul may say in the lines of Victor Hugo:

“My spirit endures like a rocky isle
Amidst the ocean of Fate,
The thunderstorm is my domicile,
The hurricane is my mate.”

But, on afterthought, the cost of heroism is seen to be the pain of that sacrifice which saves the world. So came, and suffered, the thought-creators, the reformers, and all leaders in theory, ethics and religion; and so through them originated change of standpoints, growth in ideas, and progress of humanity. Without this, human intelligence would have been mere hereditary instinct; what we call the State would have become crystalized into exact prisms of public behavior like the changelessness of a bee-colony; the Church, could it ever have arisen, would have stagnated; science would have been primitive babble, and religion mere fear and muttering. Had there been no heroes in human history, there could and would have been no human history.

The death of Jesus is to be interpreted in light of these facts. It is significant that the cost of His mission was symbolized for the Master by His cross, and that over the cross Pilate, by a curious coincidence of Roman scorn, nailed a writing declaring Him a King. Never did fate work a more felicitous parable

of event—the cross was to become His throne, sacrifice was indeed king. This was the sublime fact of what we call the Atonement in pictorial dress, and it has proved of such tremendous power over human thought and action because the fulfilment of a universal law of virtue.

For centuries theologians have been asking themselves the famous question of Anselm, "*Cur Deus homo?*" Why must a Prophet sent of God don the crown of thorns and be crucified, in order to save and to reign? Many ingenious answers have been devised, but the solution has always been near at hand. Ask why the mother must sacrifice her days and her nights, her health and strength, and, it may be, her life, to her children? Ask why the soldier must leave his home and loved ones, his business and ambitions, and go forth to defend his country and to die in a ditch? Ask why Giordano Bruno and Cecco d'Ascoli must be burned to death for seeking and proclaiming the facts God gave them eyes to see when others were

blind? Ask why Savonarola perished in the flames for wisdom beyond his age? This line of necessity is Nature's profoundest suggestion, History's strange greatness, Religion's awful mystery.

Nature prepares us for this marvel. The law of atonement is prefigured in all her arrangements and works, and what seems lower is by her always sacrificed to what she apparently esteems higher. Every natural end is a means for the attainment of higher ends, and those higher are offered up to aims beyond. In the vegetable world, inorganic substance is sacrificed to life; in the animal world, all life preys upon life—nothing, in the struggle for existence, survives except by slaughter.

When one comes to human history the law assumes a higher form, and we find that while Nature is blindly offering up one man to another, the many to the few, the weak to the strong, the witless to the shrewd, there appears among men a new, voluntary, and, therefore, noble sacrifice, and at once life

rises above the brutal conflict for survival into a realm of self-immolation of heroism. It is now that comes the mother and her self-denials, the soldier and true patriotism, the martyr and his words of forgiveness amid flames. Every page of history is illustrated, yea, made illustrious, by sublime heroisms; and one feels, as chapter after chapter is read, that man, though he may have descended from brutes, has somehow, in some regards, won the constitution of angels.

It is a curious fact that the alchemists, in their vain—though, as recent discoveries have shown, not so foolish—search after the Philosopher's Stone, gave to the earthenware vessels in which their minerals and metals were heated the name of crucible, from the Latin word *crux*—a cross; and herein we have preserved the very ancient belief that Nature must be crucified, ere she will reveal her secrets. The stone that should transmute all things into gold could be obtained only through fiery tortures. Did wise men, in this, argue backward from the necessities of human

nature? Did they infer this from the manifest fact that character must go into the crucible and into the fiery furnace, if we would convert it into that which on touch can transform society for its good? It would seem so.

Some years ago, on a fast express between New York and Philadelphia, through some displacement, the fire in the furnace of the locomotive came back in angry flames upon the engineer, and the cab filled with tongues of flame and burning gas. The engineer and his assistant hastily retreated over the tender to the baggage-car, and the train rushed forward, bereft of the watchful eye and hand that guaranteed safety for hundreds of lives. For a few dreadful moments the iron monster, belching forth flame, masterless, and wild, plunged forward. Then a man scrambled over the tender and down into the cab, into smoke and fire, and in a moment the monster was tamed, the train was stopped, and one more crippled engineer lay there to die soon in agony! History is resplendent with such

instances of pure self-denying heroism among all classes, in all ages, climes, and conditions.

And we glory in this possibility of human character; we plume ourselves upon the fact that mankind is capable of such things. And yet it seems irrational that one should die for another. But we rejoice in it. It appears beautiful to us that

“The rose is sweetest washed in morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.”

But it is hard to explain why we feel so. It is just as difficult to explain why an Abraham Lincoln must die for his people, as why Jesus was required to suffer to accomplish His larger but no more really vicarious mission. We have struck an ultimate law, and this lies back of explanation, as do all ultimates. Simply, it is true that human character rises highest in deeds of self-denial.

And so, when we come to the domain of religion proper, we are not surprised to find the sacrificial idea always foremost; there is always an altar and an offering. Piety never

feels at rest unless, somehow, its worship exacts cost. The working of this law in paganism and among superstitious people has, of course, been in much grossness and cruelty—the mother has given her babe to the sacred river; the father has burned his first-born son on the brazen knees of Moloch; the maid has yielded up to Baal her virtue, or the votary has consecrated to the sky-gods his life; statues of divinities have dripped with human blood, and altars have groaned under the horrid load of human victims. And sometimes the pagan perceives the higher meanings of the law. From some tomb inscriptions of ancient Egypt we select this: “O! Isis, since my soul is only one tear from thine eyes, let it fall, as dew, upon other souls; and while I am dying for others, let the perfume of their watered souls mount to thee. Behold me, O! Isis! ready to be thus sacrificed!” Lafcadio Hearn tells of a Japanese boy, only fourteen years old, who killed himself in order that his spirit might wait upon the spirit of a child who had died—his master’s little son. Which

fact recalls a most touching instance of self-immolation to work salvation, recorded in Rein's great work on Japan. It is the legend of a woman whose husband was at sea fishing but caught in a great storm. Picture this young wife, standing on a cliff, weeping and wringing her hands, as the winds howl about her, as the waves break with hoarse cry, and clouds of foam and mist on the shore beneath. Yonder in the tempest is her beloved: the angry, jealous gods will have him down into the bottomless deep! What shall she give to appease the ravenous spirits of wind and wave? Gold?—she has none. Precious things?—ah, but she is very poor! Only one treasure does she possess, which no cruelest divinity will despise—her life! She will die for her beloved and so, perchance, save him! And into the foaming deep she springs to appease the gods and ransom her husband.

Jesus of Nazareth, in provoking persecution and in challenging the death of the reformer, inevitable in His days, for love of men, simply responded to this sublime in-

stinct. It was in the nature of things that one of such elevation of character, of such absolute consecration to right living and teaching, should seek the line of greatest resistance and destroy Himself thereby. He could save to the uttermost only by supreme loss. He could not establish the Heavenly Kingdom by assuming a purple robe of imperialism, a crown of gems, and a scepter of jeweled gold, by ascending a throne of ivory, and encircling Himself with flatterers and legionaries. Had He ruled the nations with a rod of iron, and dashed them to pieces like a potter's vessel, according to popular expectation, His gospel would have won only place-hunters and sycophants, bloody defeats or useless victories. The work He had at heart could be accomplished only by self-immolation, and, as a Messiah, He could rule but through sympathy, self-sacrifice, and forgiveness.

There is a beautiful fitness in the medieval legend that the tree from which the cross was made grew out of a seed which fell in the Garden of Eden.

Call to mind how Jesus, at the last Paschal feast, in the upper chamber, as He took the usual cup of wine, named the "cup of thanksgiving," said, "This is my blood of the new covenant!" B'rith, or covenant, was the ancient Hebrew substantive for that compact between warring tribes or individuals in feud, which, in the primitive ferocity of human society, prevented or mitigated conflict and cruelty. Wars and feuds were ended by a b'rith, understandings and confederacies were confirmed by a b'rith. The b'rith was sealed by a sacrifice of life and a flow of blood. The occasion was often celebrated by a feast and commemorated by a heap of stones, and it took the place of contracts, treaties, and international law in modern times. This b'rith was a very sacred affair, and he who violated the compact had not only to dread the contempt of men, but much more the wrath of God. As might be supposed, to picture one's reconciliation with the Almighty as a covenant, had long been familiar imagery, and synagogue readings and homilies often sent

back the minds of listeners to the covenants made by God with His people, with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, with Jacob. God's people were bound by treaty to obedience: holiness rested on a covenant with high Heaven. Sin was treason to compact; the call of the righteous obligated the Deity, and the demand of God appealed to honor. The Ten Commandments, which seem to us only an ancient statement of moral law, were the Ten Words of the B'rith; the holiest vessel of the Temple was named the Arc of the B'rith; the Messiah was described as the Angel or Messenger of the B'rith; and the people as a race, as themselves one party in the compact, were the Holy B'rith.

Hence the meaning of Jesus in applying this imagery to Himself at that last supper. His religion was a new covenant with God, His own blood was the sacrificial seal, the supper was to be perpetuated as both celebrating feast and commemoration. By His tears and agonies, by His sufferings and self-denials, by His bloody sweat and precious blood,

he Had signed and sealed, for His followers, a holy union with God, which should win for us divine aid and the sympathy of Heaven.

The teaching of Jesus, as to His vicarious work, went no farther.

That Jesus came into the world, primarily, bound on a mission of sacrifice, to make a propitiatory offering for men, that, for instance, as the earliest theological metaphysicians declared, He was a literal ransom to the devil, to buy us off—us, the victims of that monster's rightful possessory power; or that, as later and more refined casuists averred, he was an appeasement to quench the fiery wrath of an offended God; or that, as others more modern have preferred to explain, He was a sop to the Cerberus of abstract justice in the righteous Judge of all; or that, to fall back on the recent governmental theory, He made a forensic and impressive display of sharing in the punishment to ease up the loss of the Divine dignity, and the sullying by forgiveness of the majesty of law—all such hypotheses are the mere presumptions of subtle theorists, not the

declarations of Jesus Himself, nor the testimony of the records, nor the involvements of any of the Gospel teachings. These casuistries have been fabricated out of oriental imagery, picturing (in the original intent) nothing but consecration to God, and sacrificial love and heroism.

The bloody ritual of the Hebrews has been completely misunderstood by most Christian theologians. It taught neither appeasement nor literal substitution. Doubtless many individual worshipers, their minds tinged with heathenism, read into the holy liturgy of word and symbol meanings of the grove, the high place, the idol shrine, but for these misinterpretations the authors of that sublime ancient worship were not responsible. It must be remembered that, according to the Hebrew physiology, the blood of any animal was held to be the seat of its life, and that in consequence, according to Hebrew symbolism, the blood of sacrifice did but picture the life of consecration. Blood shed on the Divine altar was life offered up to Jehovah. The whole

scheme of sacrifices was a succession of picture lessons in personal devotion to God and duty. The victim was supposed to be only a parable of the offerer. As the life of the bullock or the ram was poured out in crimson tide, the giver was saying to himself, "Here, Lord, am I. I pour out my life thus to Thee, I consecrate myself on Thine altar a whole burnt-offering." There was probably no thought among the spiritual and intelligent that Elohim could be appeased and won merely by the suffering and death of the victims. As Isaiah indignantly declared: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes!" The animal on the altar was only a picture to assist in the worship of an imaginative and impressionable people; it was but part of a stately ritual, which all meant only the personal devotion and moral purity of the giver.

What has been called the Atonement of Jesus was the sublimest antitype of the ancient ritual, the blood of a Divine Hero shed, that

is, a heroic life offered up, in perfect sacrifice of heart, will, and substance to God. Hence Paul, though none of the apostles more delighted in picturing the vicarious bearing of the Master's mission, so far from being an advocate of literal appeasement, claimed that himself shared in the atoning work of His Lord, and with himself all unselfish believers. "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," he declared to the Galatians; and by these marks, or stigmata, as it is in the Greek, he undoubtedly referred to the nail-prints on the hands and feet and the spear-wound in the side of the Crucified. To the Colossians he wrote sadly: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you all, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church." If Jesus were appeasement, so also was Paul, though in smaller measure; so also, doubtless, many.

There is a scene in Homer's *Iliad* which we suggest as instructive reading for all advocates of schemes of substitution and propitiation.

Priam, the aged King of Troy, kneels before Achilles, the slayer of Hector, his son, to beseech of the conqueror the dead body of his boy. The monarch is unattended, unprotected, and, being within the Grecian lines, his life is forfeit by the cruel laws of war. Achilles is bloodthirsty and unmerciful as the grave, yet the one pleads and the other listens:

“Unmarked the royal Priam entered in
And coming to Achilles clasped his knees,
And kissed those fearful slaughter dealing hands,
By which so many of his sons had died.
 ‘Oh! revere
The gods, Achilles, and be merciful!
Calling to mind thy father—happier he
Than I; for I have borne what no man else
That dwells on earth could bear—have laid my lips
Upon the hand of him that slew my son.
He spake. Achilles sorrowfully thought
On his own father. By the hand he took
The suppliant, and with gentle force removed
The old man from him. Both in memory
Of those they loved were weeping!’”

Shall God be less merciful than a blood-stained Grecian conqueror? Shall warriors weep, and only blood satisfy divine wrath?

No! sacrifice is divine, and to be merciful is the very inmost nature of Deity. The wrath of God is directed against wrongdoing; it bars not His mercy toward the penitent and needs no appeasement.

CHAPTER XIX

HAS JESUS COME AGAIN?

OUR thirteenth chapter, on the Coming Jesus, closed with the statement that the ages have wept and laughed over the expected advent, wept in grief of hope deferred, and laughed in scorn of prophecy made vain.

We now call attention to the fact that what has actually happened calls not for tears, nor justifies derision. No less wonderful than His life and death has proved the vitality of His memory. For nearly nineteen hundred years believers have partaken of the eucharist in remembrance of Him, and to-day faith in His presence is as alert as when He visibly walked among His disciples. The power of His "endless life" shows no abatement in its sway over imagination and conduct. The ages seem, after all, to have verified His promises, if in an unexpected way. What

the historical Christ was to Peter and Paul and the Apostolic Church, that He has continued to be to Christian devoutness. It is undeniable that, on His withdrawal from earth, Jesus became and remained the most conspicuous personality in the world. Nothing like this is recorded in history. The centuries have all come and gone, and hundreds of millions of men have passed over the human stage, and no personality has thus, in any such potency of seeming presence, persisted but that of Jesus. What has history—tame in outlines, blurred in colors, poor, shadowy drama of human unrest—what has history worthy of supreme attention in its pitiful record except that Christian civilization which, embodying all more ancient wisdom, surviving all the shocks of fate, to-day a living force, urges the world on to a future better than its past? The poets that sang are dead; the philosophers who thought, the sculptors, orators, and statesmen all have succumbed, and the great who to-day live also shall die. Truths remain, but their discoverers pass on;

principles are triumphant, but the heroes who fought for them have perished. Only Jesus, of them all, quick as of yore, still and ever thinks in men's judgments, utters Himself in their aspirations and sacrifices, rebukes, subdues, and saves human society. Well declared Bushnell of Him: "He exhaled an atmosphere of God, that should fill, and finally renew, all creation, bathing all climes and times and ages with its dateless, ineradicable power."

The most effectual acknowledgment of this is the fact that hostile critics of the Christian faith attack the churches from the standpoint, not of heathen ethics, but of His Golden Rule and of His Sermon on the Mount. All will recall the beautiful scene in Kingsley's "Hypatia," in which that fair, noble, and chaste lady of Alexandria fell a victim, as a Neo-Platonist philosopher, to the fury of a rabble of Christian monks, and, as being a heathen, was torn to pieces by a fanatic mob on the very steps of the altar of a church. Seized from her chariot, as she was driven to her lecture room, Hypatia was dragged into the

sanctuary and was there immolated to Christian bigotry. But just before they tore her limb from limb, she shook herself free from her murderers and, springing upon the steps of the high altar, gathering about her naked body her long black hair, she lifted a white arm in mute appeal to the great image of Jesus that, silent, loomed above her. Never did fiction put truth into more artistic setting, and it is so graphic because so true to profound law as well as to sublime fact. Thus, in all ages of the Church's history, in protest against superstitious interpretation of Scripture, against false belief, against evil practise and bloody persecution, the last appeal has ever been, and is, and will be to the Christ, who rises above the altar, above the priest, above all unreason, wrong, and folly. Cherish what view you will of the personality of Jesus—as to its limitations or its claims—you may not reasonably deny the tremendous hold of its at least seeming presence upon modern civilization.

We aver, without much fear of contradic-

tion, that the fineness of modern civilization has resulted from a growing conviction on the part of men of the truthfulness of the Glad Tidings of Jesus and of the loftiness of His ideals. The Divine Love, Human Brotherhood, the Hope of Glory, the Christian Citizen, the Christian Hero, the Christly Woman, and the Christly Home—these thoughts, derivable from the Prophet of Nazareth, expanded to their full meaning and application, have made an old and grisly world young again, and have converted a gross material civilization into an enlightenment of justice, purity, temperance, and peace.

Mark you, it is not Christendom which has accomplished this. Rather has Christendom disgraced the Master, parodying His words and transversing His spirit. Not the visible Church nor the churches, not the priesthoods nor the creeds, have turned the world upside down; too much these have ignored the saving Presence, and have divided, in carnal strife and wicked jealousies, over subtleties of doctrine and niceties of organization and

ritual, unfruitful for the progress of righteousness. Only the innate Christly, slowly becoming dominant over the human imagination and action, has condemned the dark, bloody, and stupid past and called for a future of restoration and achievement.

Whatever gains and losses there have been in the march of events, this is certainly true, that the world has grown gentler; it is less cruel and rude and therefore more sensitive to pain, more perplexed at sight of suffering, less horror-stricken and more pensive in the presence of death. Nature's struggle for existence, which involves mankind also in its entanglements and brutalities, and which of old was viewed as a matter of course, now stirs a feeling of dismay in every earnest breast, and earth is full of men and women who muse on life gently. Never were men so thoughtful as to-day, and there is coming into the discussion of social problems a new spirit of pity, of sadness, of magnanimous yearning, akin to the tears of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus and on Mt. Olivet. Even unbelief scoffs seldom now;

it, too, thirsts and pants for truth to believe, and for food to satisfy the heart's hunger. A Robert Ingersoll stands at his brother's grave, "between the icy peaks of two eternities," in admitted horror of loneliness and grief.

He said He would come! Could He have appeared in an Advent any more real, any more comforting to believers, any more helpful to the world?

CHAPTER XX

ANTICHRIST

STILL, that essential Christianity has been instituted, we do not and can not claim.

Three evil forces of tremendous potency have antagonized all efforts to realize in forms, customs, and standards the Kingdom of God, which remains to-day what it already was when Jesus first came, the mere inner sway of essential righteousness in the hearts of individuals.

Against visible Christianity the three powers of Antichrist have been Dogmatism, Ecclesiasticism, and Capitalism.

Dogmatism began with Paul and culminated with the Inquisition!

Ecclesiasticism began with the Council of Jerusalem and culminated with the Council of Trent and full-fledged Romanism.

And when in a modern age of intelligence, education and liberty these monsters lost their hold, Capitalism took their place, and the iron shackles of the Inquisition and the spider-webs of priestcraft were replaced by chains of gold.

Of the two first mentioned it is unnecessary for us to speak at length, as their indictment was written and their doom pronounced long ago. Each ran its evil course and left its trail of curse, and nothing we can add to the story will render any more impressive the anathemas of holy eloquence which good and great men have hurled at these foes of righteousness and travesties of Jesus.

The case of Capitalism as a form of Antichrist is different. Only in modern times, as civilization has developed along capitalistic lines, has this monster unveiled his grisly front. To assail dogmatism and ecclesiasticism for the enlightenment of persons likely to read this little treatise, would be quite needless, but the arraignment of Capitalism in the Church is both novel and pertinent to the

theme. For the Coming of Jesus and the Going of His Church, consequent upon His death, are correlated themes.

The larger problem of Capitalism as an economic question it is not necessary to moot in these pages. Whether riches be good or evil, and whether the modern methods of accumulation and expenditure be safe or dangerous for human society, we are not to ask, the query not being germane to our theme.

What we will discuss here is the bearing of modern Capitalism upon church life and prosperity.

We are brought face to face with this matter because of the manifest falling away from instituted Christianity of one of the three classes that make up our industrial system.

In this inquiry we can not avail ourselves of direct instruction from Jesus, for He lived in an age preceding entirely the conditions in view. In the days of the Master, wealth existed as money in hand, precious things dis-

played or hoarded away, cattle, real estate, exclusive privileges, and slaves. Riches in large amounts could come only by inheritance, seizure, or the favor of rulers. There were mines of considerable yield in precious stones or metals, but they were worked by slaves and owned by princes or their parasites. There was some manufacturing and much commerce, but Palestine was a very poor country, and even Jerusalem, the capital city, was a wretched little walled town, not comparable with a fifth-rate city of our age. The corporation, as a civic person, had not been invented. There were money-lenders but no banks, interest was paid on loans but looked upon as usury and despicable. Riches were the accompaniment of power, its cause, and its prey.

In view of these facts, Jesus was naturally suspicious of the rich; He viewed them as associated with rapacity, tyranny, luxury, and vice. King's palaces, fine raiment, gluttony, and display were on the broad road to death. Money was good only for meeting the few simple needs of man and the relief of the un-

fortunate and the poor. The hoarding of treasures in a storeroom or vault, and the luxurious expenditure of the same, alike aroused His antagonism. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth," He constantly insisted. When the rich ruler came to Him seeking the way of life, He told that really admirable young man to go sell all that he had and give to the poor, as the first step; and when the youth very naturally objected, and went away sorrowing, He sighed and reflected, "How hard it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God!" Such a deep cleft seemed to yawn between riches and righteousness. Hence the bitter fling against the wealthy, in the Sermon on the Mount: "Woe unto you that are rich! For ye have your consolation! Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger!" Hence, also, the parable of Dives in torment and Lazarus on Abraham's bosom, and its seemingly anarchistic and irrational explanation.

How Jesus, if He were to live to-day, would view the modern system of Capitalism it is

hard to say, and we can not infer this from His treatment of wealth in His own times.

But we certainly know that modern wealth has furnished for the churches a new form of Antichrist.

The social structure of to-day, viewed economically, may be divided into those who labor and those who do not.

Those who do not labor—tramps, beggars, criminals, and the idle rich—are mere parasites—warts, wens, cancers, vermin—on the body social, and these do not here further concern us.

Those who do labor may be divided into three classes: the wage-earners, the salary winners, and the employers. We used to talk about the masses, but since wage-earners have organized themselves into unions and federations there are no masses any more, and only classes. Society is aligned now according to methods of labor. It is either work of hands, work of minds, or work in employment of hands and of minds.

By wage-earners we mean all men and women who subsist on wages earned by manual labor, and who, though they may possess some property, have it lying in a home, or in savings banks or similar institutions.

By salary winners we mean men and women who subsist by mental labor and receive salaries—clerks, teachers, college professors, superintendents, ministers, doctors, and lawyers.

Both wage-earners and salary winners are to be distinguished from the employers, who have accumulated or inherited wealth and who invest this in productive business, thereby employing the other two classes and enjoying use of interest, dividends, profits—the farmers, the merchants, the manufacturers, the shippers, the bankers.

To repeat, the wage-earners, the salary winners, and the employers, make up modern society considered economically. This is a broad and not perfectly well-defined distinction, but for our purpose it is sufficiently exact.

The wisdom or folly, the right or wrong, of

this organization of society does not now concern us. We are interested only in its bearing upon instituted Christianity. What we will call attention to, is the fact that the Christian churches have drawn away from the wage-earners and allied themselves to the salaried and employing classes, and that so they have become part of the capitalistic aspect of modern society.

Largely freed from the domination of Dogmatism and of Ecclesiasticism, they have fallen under a spell of Capitalism, which renders worldly the devout and unchurches a great social class.

Capitalism to-day is just as effectually defeating the purpose of the teachings of Jesus as did the inquisition and the hierarchy in former ages.

We know that generally the problem is stated differently, and that we are told that the wage-earners have ceased to go to church, as if the fault were with them.

But why do wage-earners withdraw presence and support from the churches? Surely

not because of poverty, as some of them aver. Never were wage-earners so well paid and never were hours of work so few; this class has increased income and leisure, and find themselves able to contribute of time and money for the success of movements interesting them. It is not because of unbelief, as others insist; for while unbelief abounds it does not distinguish this class, and probably they are less well informed as to the writings of skepticism and more credulous than the classes that still cling to the institutes of religion. Furthermore, there is among them no inherent repugnance to the essential teachings of the Christian religion; in their arguments they constantly quote the Sermon on the Mount; they claim to revere Jesus, and as an exponent of their own interest and views: they like to be married and buried by the minister; they do not delight in vice, nor scorn virtue more than the others; their sense of right and wrong is as keen, and their suffering in time of pain and sorrow as poignant. Why, then, the growing cleft?

Perhaps it will help us to observe that this same cleft is running into a grand cleavage of separation from both the salaried and the employer classes, over the whole social surface. Everywhere, and in all regards, the wage-earners are opposing a hostile front to other classes, organizing for defense and attack. It is the hands of society against the brains, and long study of the problem has convinced the author that underlying the increasing unfriendliness of the wage-earners to the churches lies that general discontent which characterizes all organized labor with the entire social fabric of to-day.

The whole trouble is the conviction, on the part of the wage-earners, that the churches are aristocratic, the exclusive domain for the salaried and employing classes, and no place for men and women who own little but their own hands and live by daily effort, and that the ecclesiastical systems all fortify wrongs in social conditions they feel themselves suffering.

The pity of it is, that this claim is true.

The churches have become the organs of the salaried and employing classes.

The modern churches, Protestant, Greek, or Romanist—High Church, Low Church, Broad Church—Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, or what not, through all the hundreds of names and kinds, are capitalistic enterprises, based not on essential ethics and inner holiness, but on inherited dogmas, personal prejudices, and preferences and social affinities, and run by holding of property and employment of agents and advertisement, not worse and not better than other lines of enterprise. Take the individual Protestant church, which is an epitome, an example *in petto*, of the great ecclesiastical bodies. The ordinary denominational local church is a kind of social religious club, designed to secure for a few the comfort and culture of fine music, eloquent preaching, pleasing social contact, and esthetic religiousness. A church building is not “My Father’s House,” not humanity’s asylum, not the refuge of penitence, but the possession of a few, even pews and hymn

books being personal or corporate property, the pastor and choir corporate selections, the preaching on a platform conspicuously made by man. If you do not like the combination, you may stay away; and if, liking it, you refuse to pay the dues, you might just as well stay away. A congregation is a fraternity; you must, to use a western phrase, "Put up or— —" be uncomfortable. Birds of a feather flock together; birds of other plumage were better elsewhere. There is no responsibility except to the corporation.

Pass from the individual church to its denomination, or to any larger religious federation or hierarchy, the same is true with widening of barriers. Originally this "persuasion" sprang out of some dreary situation of feud, persecution, schism, pride, and prejudice; now it has property, endowments, learning, eloquence, art, *esprit de corps*, and fights other persuasions for room to grow and to rule. If the churches are corporations, seeking fraternal advantages, the denominations are trusts, massing church properties and influences.

The struggle of denominations for existence and supremacy is disgraceful. The smallest hamlets present the appearance of a battleground, with churches militant in hostile camps. Any little city, say of ten thousand inhabitants, will display its ten or fifteen church edifices, and in them ten or fifteen highly educated clergymen, preaching each to a little coterie of listeners. These expensively trained clerics, many of whom would gladly and effectively address crowded audiences, fritter away time and strength in an endless routine of petty duties not requiring elaborate training. In this city will perhaps be found missionary churches whose only purpose is to perpetuate and gratify divisive instincts—a French-Canadian Congregational, a French-Canadian Baptist, a Colored Congregational, a Colored Methodist, a Colored Presbyterian, and so on. Possibly many thousands of dollars will be thrown away to enable a few families to indulge in the extravagance of sectarian prejudice or of racial seclusion, the while a dozen churches about them are half empty.

The enormous wastefulness of this system renders a sharp competition for patronage from the rich inevitable, ultimately enslaves the pews, and muzzles very effectively the minister. To offer superior attractions in pulpit, choir, and elegance of house of worship, and social entertainment, becomes the secret of good church management; and, instead of sending forth a great sum of money to sustain charities and deserving missions, the rival societies barely and only with certainty of deficits, which their rich members must make good, and by aid of fairs and theatricals, hold their own. Not to win souls but to secure paying pewholders is the supreme consideration—not to combine for charity, but for sufficient revenue.

A study of the various resorts to turn an honest penny by offering pleasing entertainment would throw a flood of light upon the extent and gravity of the evil. The editor of a religious journal thus recently bewailed the trials of the churches in his neighborhood: "They have raffled for crazy-quilts, dipped

into grab-bags, voted for the handsomest man or for the most popular minister in town, offered the privilege of kissing the handsomest young lady in the hall for one dollar or five dollars, sold cigars at the hands of sweet little girls, offered for ten cents guesses at the number of pins in a cushion, etc., until they are at their wits' end for taking resorts in raising money." And the good editor suggested a boxing-match and a side bar. Indeed, the author knows of a church in Jersey City which actually bought a discarded bar and placed it in their entertainment room for temperance drinks. Said the pastor, in explanation: "It makes the boys feel more at home here." Even this is not so bad as the course of a certain church, of high sanctity, in Springfield, Mass., which once advertised as an inducement to attend a festival, "Pretty waiter girls!" Elbert Hubbard, in the *Independent*, stated that in his village of East Aurora there are seven preachers on salaries of from four hundred to nine hundred a year. "Among the village churches there is more or

less strife. The fires of hate are often respectably banked, but the embers smolder, and now and again the flame bursts out. The churches are all in competition with each other. Rivalry is rife, and the spirit of the Master is smothered in a scrimmage to 'raise the wind.' Chicken-pie sociables, poverty parties, guesses as to the number of pieces in a bed-quilt, fairs, maple-sugar soirées, and all the usual round of petty pious blackmail is resorted to, in order to make up the deficit. And some years ago, we tried the plan at one of our churches of having a dozen pretty young women take off their shoes and stockings and stand behind a curtain that left exposed only their pedals. Then we paid ten cents each, passed by, and made guesses as to the owners of the underpinning. The man who made the highest number of correct guesses received a prize." The last mentioned feet-exposure ingenuity has been repeated on the Pacific Coast, to the knowledge of the author.

A curious and significant feature of the sit-

uation is the pitiful cry for more ministers. Young men are exhorted to fling themselves into the breach—as heroes to lead the army of God against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? Not at all, but rather that each little starveling flock may have a shepherd of its own, even if on starvation salary, and, in the selection of the victim, to be able to choose and to reject. Of the Congregational ministry, one-third at least are without charge, though in good and regular standing—presumably, in most cases, because the churches do not want them—and every little vacant parish rejoices in a list of available candidates. “Candidating” has become a vice—the author calls the habit “candidate chewing”—and is inveterate as the tobacco or morphine habit. A large church in Holyoke, Mass., once upon a time, began to be frightened about the vacancy of their pulpit and diminishing congregation, but one of the leaders bade them be at ease, and declared, “Oh! there are lots of ministers; the woods are full of them!” And, in order that there be

lively candidating, the woods must be kept full of them.

The churches are not in any conspicuous way interested in humanitarian work, as church members are too heavily laden with denominational and local expenditure of their own to give much to outside charities.

In short, churches are capitalistic enterprises, run on commercial lines by small corporations, considered locally, or in great denominational confederations of these, by the usual methods of sharp competition, promotion, and advertisement, and for the delectation of the incorporators, with the least possible margin for disinterested charity.

The result is, that the poor are practically shut out, while the church life itself, absorbed in the awful struggle for existence, lacks spirituality, evangelistic energy, and humanitarian fervor. There is much talking, preaching, and praying about how to reach the *MASS*ES (by which is meant the class of wage-earners), and these masses stand afar off and eye the church folk, either with a puzzled helplessness

in understanding, or with a grin of amusement, or with a scowl of wrath. Over the door of one of the most wealthy and palatial of the Fifth Avenue church edifices in New York City is carved into massive stone this legend: "To the poor the Gospel is preached." Some naughty wag, passing by, wrote underneath, in green chalk, "Only not here!"

The reader must not understand the author as belittling, in these words, the essential righteousness of the men and women who make up the various religious bodies. He admits that in this local and denominational deadlock of energies there is tied up tremendous moral and religious power. Samson is blind and not over-wise, but he is still very strong. The problem of this age is how to correct the system and release the imprisoned forces. Plenty of material in pulpit and pew is at hand for heroism and even martyrdom, if opportunity only offer.

The remedy for these evils, commonly suggested by Protestants, is consolidation or federation of denominations; by Catholics the

remedy urged is reform within the hierarchy.

Consolidation or federation of denominations is quite impracticable; it would result in an aggravation of evils, for an immense denominational trust would appear, cornering religion, which trust might cut down the waste of the present extravagance, but would reestablish religious intolerance and prove even more highly offensive to the class of wage-earners whose defection is deplored. Reform within a hierarchy has always been and will ever be impossible for obvious reasons.

Relief can not come unless Dogmatism, Ecclesiasticism, and Capitalism alike are forever and totally abandoned. If you would have Christ, execute Antichrist.

And when Dogmatism, Ecclesiasticism, and Capitalism have vanished, what will remain? Nothing! Everything!

There will abide nothing that the carnal heart delights in, nothing that feeds vanity, pride, and oppression, nothing of pomp or circumstance.

But there will continue all that is needful to the vision of the Unseen and Eternal, everything involved in the sway of a virtuous life, everything requisite for character in this world and preparation for the world to come. Creeds as shibboleths, priesthoods in hierarchy, and wealth as plutocracy, and all that these things imply, generate and provoke, will have become memories; but God and the worshiper, and song, prayer, and praise, and alms, and forgiveness, and charity of thought and deed, will have suffered no eclipse.

CHAPTER XXI

THE INVISIBLE AND UNIVERSAL KINGDOM

BUT is an organized Christendom necessary for the utterance of a Kingdom of Righteousness all within? Is a visible church, incorporated and militant, requisite to sway the influence of a Brotherhood, who are unseen, anywhere and everywhere?

May not a time come when religion shall need no creeds, no priests, no set-apart edifices, no ceremonial?

Perhaps we may throw light upon this problem by considering, in suggestive analogy, the cases of those cognate departments of human feeling, ethics and esthetics.

Take the department of ethics or abstract morality. Ethics, as a sway over human conduct, has never needed written codes, forms, and rituals since it has abundantly flourished

without. Men have listened to the voice of conscience, and suffered from the stings of remorse, in all lands and ages, without even tables of stone and Ten Commandments. Customs originate morals, the requirements of society beget duties, and conscience responds without elaborate machinery. Public opinion follows the guidance of individual wisdom in forming ethical judgments, and individual standards bow low before public opinion; and, while ethical culture societies have doubtless done good work, they have reached few persons, and never been indispensable. Nothing analogous to Christendom, or the Roman hierarchy, or a modern denomination has arisen, in this realm, and so far from morals having been guaranteed or enforced by these agencies, ethics, pure and simple, has been rather divorced from all ecclesiasticism.

The same is true of esthetics. When and where, in the history of Art, have hierarchy and organization of artists been requisite to appreciation and delineation of the Beautiful?

Has any Artdom rivalled Christendom in compulsion and punishment? Does the world owe Homer or Phidias or Raphael to some instituted art movement?

It is true that both ethics and esthetics can be taught, and have been, and that moralists and artists are the better for training, and that schools for both have existed time out of mind; but neither ethics nor esthetics have ever been instituted for authoritative sway over men, have ever been guaranteed by priests, prescribed in symbols, or regulated by authority. Men, in considerable numbers, have come true to their appreciation of the beautiful in nature and the Right in conduct—not without argument, opinion, teaching, controversy, and influence, but without dogmatism and without penalty.

Now wherein is religion different from its sisters, morality and art? Is it in its essentials any less a region of opinion and speculation? Will it come by compulsion? Will it go, if not made a habit under penalty? Is it not a personal matter? Is it not a response to

the Infinite Spirit made by the inner man? Forms and ceremonies may be good crutches for the weak and ignorant, but are they never to be cast aside? Is the Invisible and Universal Kingdom impotent unless cribbed, cabined, and confined in a church, a denomination, or a hierarchy? Can you trust men less, in their reaction to the touch of the Infinite, than in their answer to the appeal of the Beautiful and their obedience to the compulsion of social obligation? Suppose we could, somehow, secure devout worship of God and loving ministration for men, not without teaching, opinion, and influence, but without priestcraft, dogmatism, or penalty—would not the whole idea of Jesus be embodied and the whole need of humanity be met?

Nay, hierarchies, cathedrals, rituals, creeds, denominations, choirs, preachers, confessions, and protestations—would the heavens fall, if they were all abandoned and forgotten?

We are unable to answer these questions; but it does appear to the author, in his wilder moments, that essential religion needs no

bolstering from human authority, secures nothing good by imposing penalties, and finds real utterance only in sincere personal and social worship, and humble personal and collective altruism. And we do consider ourselves on very firm ground in urging that those who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and evolve His ideas of personal and collective righteousness, must walk along the following paths.

They must shorten and simplify the creeds until these cease to be exclusive of any earnestness, essentially devout and sacrificial. As Lord Bacon long ago said: "Truth is the daughter of Time, not of Authority."

In narrowing the creeds, the churches ought to broaden their ethical horizon. They must realize that Capitalism, with its intricate system of finance, its enormous multiplication of wealth, and highly differentiated organization of society, has furnished a new field of labor for conscience, and a new range of application for ethical judgment.

There have arisen into the moral vision of men many novel, very atrocious, and yet very insidious kinds of wrongdoing, as adulteration of manufactured foods, the wrecking of railroads, the despoiling of savings banks, insurance companies, and other institutions of trust, or the erection of gigantic sky-scraping monopolies, founded on favoritism, cemented with the life-blood of competitors, promoted by fraud, bribery, and terror, and used by remorseless tyranny for its own further enrichment. These new forms of depravity are fully as harmful to the transgressor, and to the numberless victims, as even the worst outbreaks of old-time lust, wrath, greed, and envy; but neither the doer nor the suffering public are fully awake to their turpitude. And what concerns us in our theme, momentarily, through the unreadiness of conscience to react in the criminal, and through the blindness of the many who fail even to discern the crime, often the churches themselves become strongholds of iniquity, eking out income with the contributions of the devout robber, and

sometimes soliciting a share in the unholy spoils.

This situation can not be presented in more telling description than by Edward Alsworth Ross in the *Atlantic Monthly* (May, 1905), who, in a notable article, writes as follows:

“The man who picks pockets with a railway rebate, murders with an adulterant instead of a bludgeon, burglarizes with a rake-off instead of a jimmy, cheats with a company prospectus instead of a deck of cards, or scuttles his town instead of his ship, does not feel on his brow the brand of a malefactor. The shedder of blood, the oppressor of the widow and the fatherless, long ago became odious; but latter-day treacheries fly no skull-and-crossbones at the masthead. . . .

“How decent are the pale slayings of the quack, the adulterator and the purveyor of polluted water, compared with the red slayings of the bandit or assassin! . . . The stealings and slayings that lurk in the complexities

of our social relations are not deeds of the dive, the dark alley, the lonely road, and the midnight hour. . . . The modern high power dealer of woe wears immaculate linen, carries a silk hat and a lighted cigar, sins with a calm countenance and a serene soul, leagues or months from the evil he causes.

“The same qualities that lull the conscience of the sinner blind the eyes of onlookers. People are sentimental and bastinado wrongdoing not according to its harmfulness, but according to the infamy that has come to attach to it. Undiscerning, they chastise with scorpions the old authentic sins, but spare the new. They do not see that boodling is treason, that blackmail is piracy, that embezzlement is theft, that speculation is gambling, that tax-dodging is larceny, that railroad discrimination is treachery, that the factory labor of children is slavery, that deleterious adulteration is murder. It has not come home to them that the fraudulent promoter ‘devours widows’ houses,’ that the monopolist ‘grinds the faces of the poor,’ that mercenary editors and spell-

binders 'put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' . . ."

The churches must insist that our clergy shall not be a dilettanti professional class of orators, but men of action, with prophetic vision, who are not hired to preach at us so much as supported to lead us. A clergyman of the "white-cravated" sort, who perorates on a little round of conventional themes, mostly remote from our own struggles and failings, "in gracious dew of pulpit eloquence and all the well-whipt cream of courtly sense," who belabors only the Turks, the Mormons, and other far-away sinners, and who flatters the rascals before him for so much a year, vacation thrown in, is of no use whatever to save the lost or better the world.

The churches must abolish the quartet choir: for most evidently, if the purpose be worship, nothing can be plainer than that the music should be made subjective to the worshipers and not an objective exhibition of

fine art. The pretty soprano must go with the golden-mouthed orator.

We must unite the little churches into big ones by breaking down barriers. Away with preferences and prejudices, and down to essentials! Two-thirds of the church edifices should be sold and at least one-half of the educated ministers and priests allowed to seek other employment. In cities, unite all churches of the same name, and in villages unite churches of different names into union parishes! Cut down extravagance! welcome the poor!

Lastly, and chiefly, we must make this large church a mechanism for helping the hurt of the world. Its occupation should be to solve practically the social problems of its neighborhood, by consecrated wisdom, and by personal sacrifice and ministration; to antagonize vice and crime in the community, and to secure for every child or youth within the boundary of the parish something like a fair chance of liv-

ing unpolluted, happy, and useful lives. The dear old chummy church—how the carnal man in us loves it—the dear old chummy church, with its pulpit eloquence, its artistic music, its well-groomed congregation, its jolly festivals, its roguish fairs, its saucy Easter bonnets, and Christmas merrymakings, and all its petty frivolity and aristocratic pride, must go, and in its place must come a union of the unselfish to voice only virtue, humanity, and charity—to encourage the poor, guide the feeble-minded, restrain the unruly, father the orphan, right the wronged, rebuke the evil-doer, scathe hypocrisy, stigmatize pride, and defy the World, the Flesh, and the Devil! The church's purity can be preserved, not by formulas for signature, but only by an atmosphere vice can not breathe! Hypocrisy must be deprived of its cloak by offering no prizes to worldliness, and the brethren kept from contact with pride and folly by discarding the alliance with wealth, by opening pews to all, "first come, first served," and by liberating the pulpit from bondage to rich sinners. There must be no

claim of special sanctity for the elect, no railing accusation against the outsider.

Such, whether we follow them or not, are the lines of progress toward the ideals of Jesus.

And perhaps—who knows—a time may come when, creeds having become evanescent, ecclesiastical prejudices vanished, the churches may merge into enterprises of charity, the Kingdom itself remaining, what it has ever been, an invisible and universal brotherhood!

But all this may take æons. Never mind. Bacon said, "The old age of time is the youth of the world!" The Past is a flitted dream, the future endlessly unrolls. Things and forms and men die, but ideas live. God's law of progress is a sublime evolution, scorning æons—it is from original fire-mist of the vacant heavens to the final splendor of His Presence—that is to say, from fire to life, and from life to genius, from savage to sage, from

mortal to glorified saint, from faith to sight, from love to love, from grace to glory. The Present is God's Chariot: we may be sure that He holds securely in His hands the reins of the Future.

CHAPTER XXII

THE UNFINISHED JESUS

IN the generation which preceded Raphael and Michael Angelo, there appeared in Italy a man of universal genius, eminent as a mechanician, an engineer, a chemist, a geologist, and a geographer; he was the most distinguished painter of his time, a sculptor, an architect, a musician, and a critic. He painted on a wooden shield a dragon so formidable in aspect that all who beheld it shuddered: he made mechanical birds, a walking lion, and a lizard with rolling eyes and wings, which, as they rose and fell, displayed oscillating quicksilver with brilliant effect. He invented tools and machines, devised canals and tunnels, steam-cannons and breach-loaders, thus anticipating many great discoveries. He was so far ahead of his times that men could not keep up with him, so that his inventions and dis-

coveries, too vast or quite out of even uncommon sight, soon were forgotten. To this universal genius nothing seemed too hard, except to paint the face of Jesus. His greatest painting was the "Last Supper"—for no one could be alluded to in the above terms but Leonardo da Vinci—and for ten years he labored on that great mural picture on the wall of the refectory at Milan. He finished it easily—John, Peter, and Judas, the sop, the query, the rebuke of the traitor—all but the face of the Master, which baffled him; for, while he could easily have made it spiritual, beautiful, divine, he was puzzled to put into it all the soul of Jesus. His genius proved insufficient, and, discouraged, at last he abandoned the attempt. A less conscientious hand finished the work, and the Jesus received a face, such as it was.

Many painters, less appreciative or more rash, have delineated Jesus, but one always turns from their pictures disappointed; one expects so much, and it somehow is not all of Jesus we behold.

If the greatest genius has failed, may not

the author of this little treatise solace himself if he let fall the brush, acknowledging that over his feeble outlines the imagination and spirituality of the reader must play, to warm and ennoble the sketch into the superlative original.

Some will throw aside this book with a disappointment like that which is caused in the author's mind by contemplation of the face in the Milan refectory, which Leonardo dared not paint and which another ventured. So be it! The author is pleased that he has failed. Thirty-five years he has mused upon this sublimest and most beautiful personality in history, and now the attempted portrayal will dissatisfy none so much as himself. And his only comfort is the thought that at least one mortal man baffles description and transcends analysis.

It is easy to cut the Gordian knot by saying that He was God incarnate: that would begin and end the matter, and there would be nothing to wonder at and nothing to explain; then, superlative qualities of mind and heart would

be matter of course, quite to have been expected, and this book an impertinence, a folly stupendous, and nothing short of a blasphemy.

But assuming Him to be a veritable man, inbreathed of the Spirit of God, yet still Himself, humanity appears in Him expanding in sublime possibilities, and in our very failure satisfactorily to analyze, we take courage, aspire, and strive.

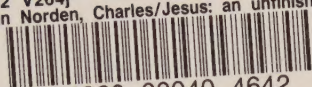
We leave our picture of Jesus, like Leonardo's, unfinished, glad that we partake of His humanity, hopeful for our own personal enlargement, hopeful for the future of our race, trusting the Spirit of divine Wisdom and Love abroad in the world, and breathing out our loyalty to the Master, dead yet ever living, in the sweet lines of Edmund Spenser,

“Oh, blessed Well of Love! Oh, Flowre of Grace!
Oh, glorious Morning Star! Oh, Lampe of Light!
Most lively Image of thy Father's Face!
Eternal King of Glorie! Lord of Light!
Meeke Lamb of God, before all worlds beight,
How can we thee requite, for all this good!
Or what can prize that Thy most precious Blood!”

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